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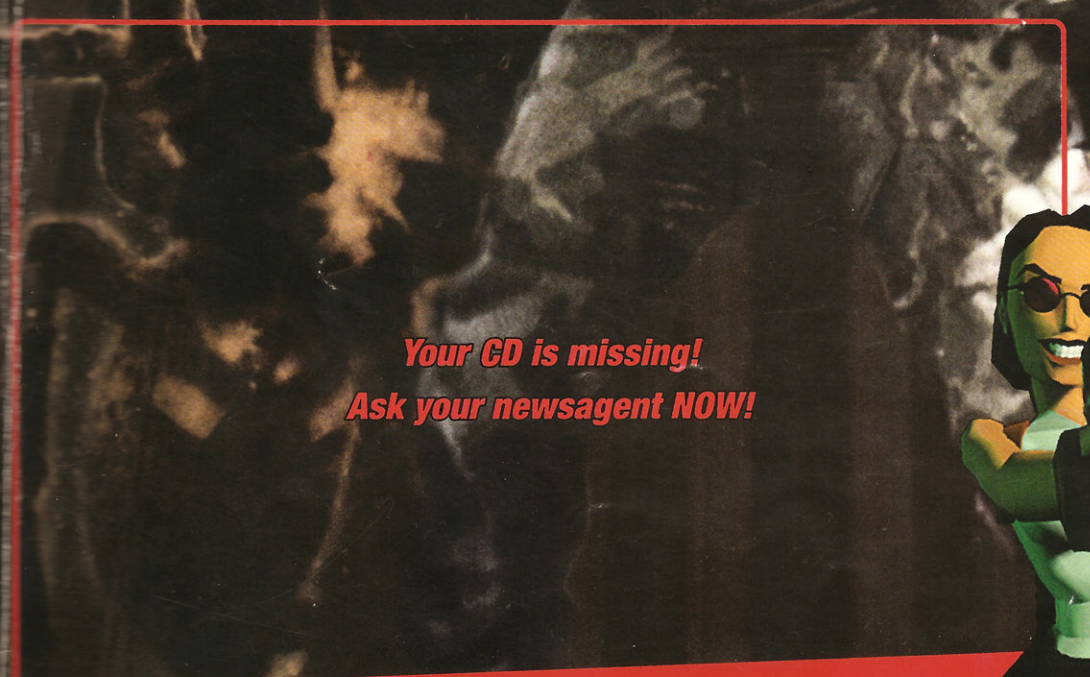
Ecstatica 2
This Ain't No Fairy Tale

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The Vest Is Yet To Come

A-10 Cuba!
A Seriously Fun Flight Sim

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PLUS! TOMB RAIDER PLAYER'S GUIDE

MARVELLOUS!
NEW GAME OFFER
See page 102

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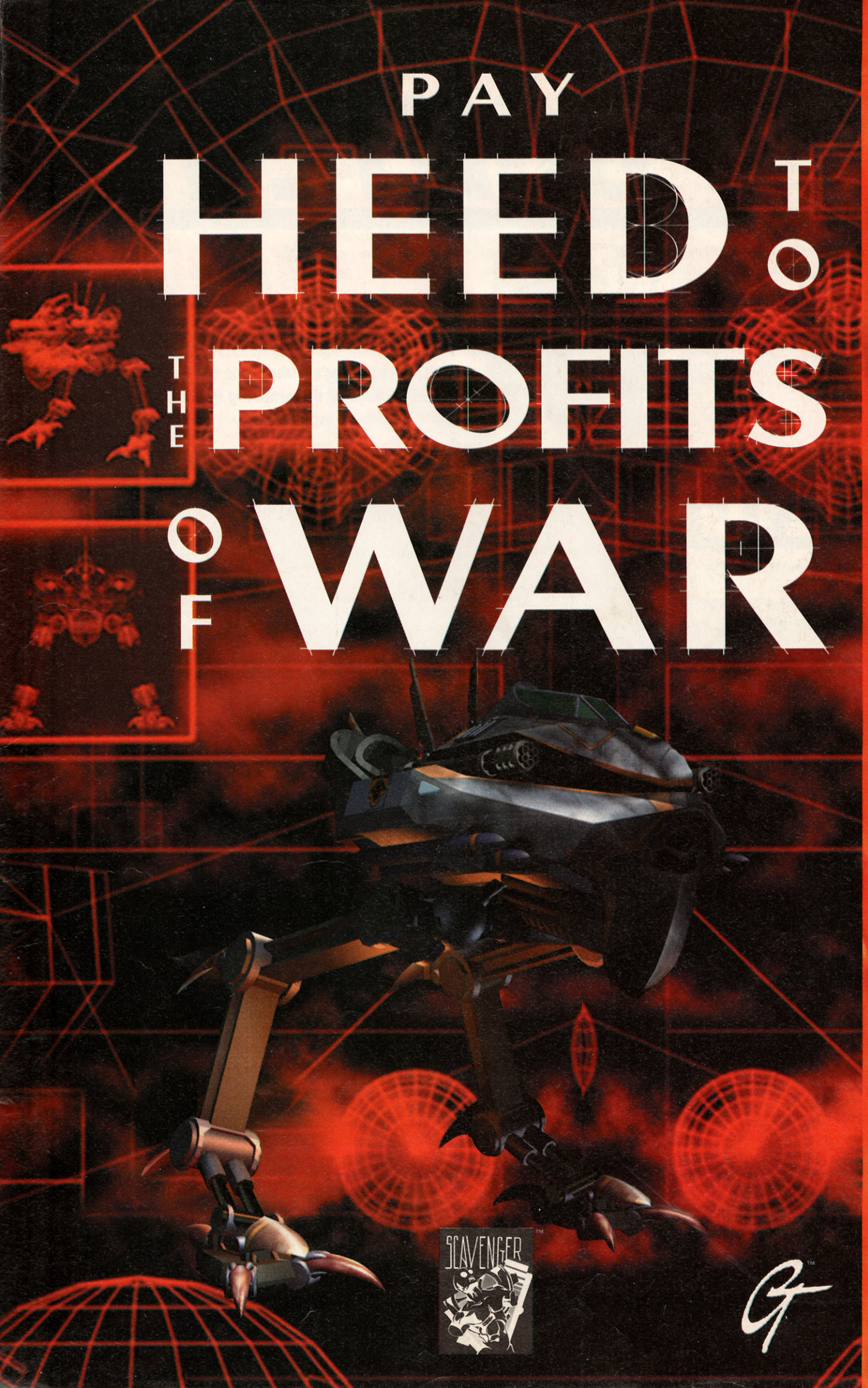
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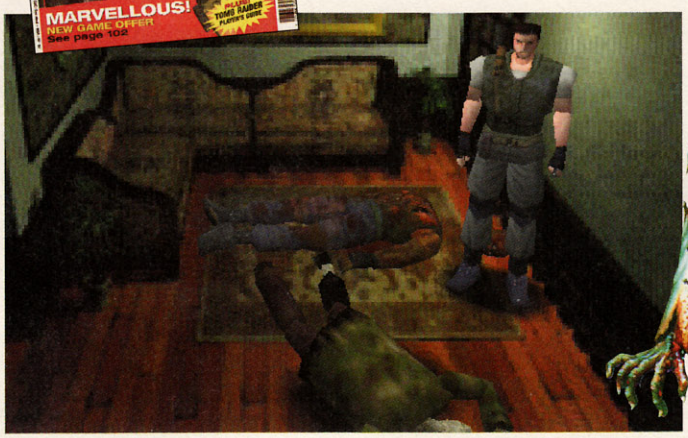
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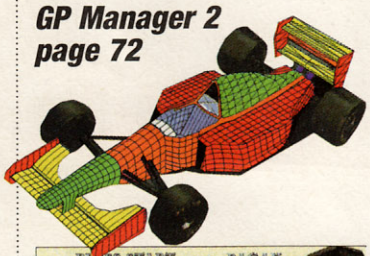
PUT ON YOUR 3D GLASSES NOW

The 3D accelerator revolution is here! Check out our EXCLUSIVE look at the amazing PowerVR card and the games it will be supporting.





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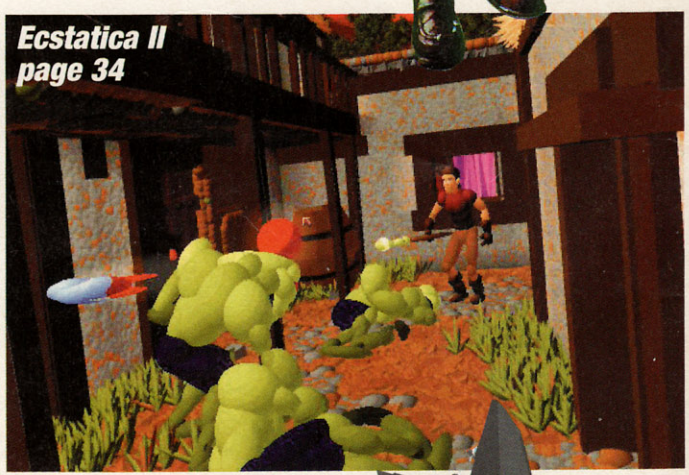
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CD ZONE

Help!

The CD not working? HD playing up? The PC's being a total bast? Don't worry – phone our helpline and sort yourself out pronto!:

HD DISK HELP

Phone Matthew on 01274 736990

Any week day between 9am and 4pm

CD-ROM HELP

Phone ABT on 01708 250250

Any week day between 11am and 6pm

(Please DO NOT phone the PC Zone office as your calls will NOT be answered)

If you are calling either help line, then please take note of the following points:

- If possible have your PC operating and near to the phone when you call.
- If this is not possible, note down as much relevant information as possible ie system type, sound card, RAM etc, plus the nature of the fault.
- Make sure you have a pen and paper to hand when you call to jot down the relevant info.

Broken or Missing CD?

If you are unable to get your grubby paws on the CD issue, then fear not! Simply fill out this slip, enclose your HD from the cover plus a cheque for a whole £1 and send it to:

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CDs from previous issues are also available.

HD DISKS



To install this month's floppy demo go to DOS and insert disk one and type PCZONE. Once you've installed the game under DOS, you need to go into Windows, change to the folder you installed it to and double click on the STARS.EXE. This will then install the game fully onto your hard drive. Follow the on-screen instructions and away you go.

Stars! (Empire Interactive)

No FMV, no cutscenes, no rendered thingummys – just a f**king great game. According to the adverts, that is. From where I'm standing (on top of Well-Adjusted Hill) it looks like a f**king *saddo* game, but hey, I've been wrong about these things before and guys like Andrew Wright and Daniel Emery just love it to bits. *Stars* is a game of intergalactic conquest that's apparently very addictive indeed if you're into all that deep strategy stuff . If you're in on your own this evening, and you're not likely to be disturbed, why not give it a spin? You're in for a fun night.

Specs: Win95/3.1 DX2-66 8Mb RAM **Controls:** Mouse, keyboard.

STARS IN THEIR FACES

I just thought of a really great idea for the next series of 'Stars In Their Eyes'. It's just the same as it's always been, except that the title of the show gets taken a little more literally. The audience is supplied with countless ninja throwing stars, and they get rewarded with prizes each time they hit one of the performing carbon blobs in the eyes. Oh yeah, and they'd have harpoon guns at the ready for whenever Matthew bloody Kelly decided to show his loathsome, grinning face.

CD-ROM



This month's CD is absolutely bursting with fantastic demos, utilities. To run the CD from DOS, insert the CD into your CD-ROM drive, change to the appropriate drive (ie. D:) and type PCZONE.EXE. To run the CD from Windows, insert the CD and click on BROWSER.EXE under the CD icon.

Ecstatica II (Psygnosis)

Over a decade ago, Bucks Fizz (aka the voice of reason) enjoyed well-deserved chart success with their poignant, honeyed aria to all things fantastical, 'In the Land of Make Believe'. Expertly combining a memorable lyric (in which an imaginary voyage to the far shores of human consciousness and beyond is described in intricate detail), with a melody of rare and fragile elegance, it stands alone amongst the gaudy compositions of its day as a work of true art that shall echo down the years. We shall never forget its haunting, seductive refrain: *"Run. For the sun. Little one. You're an outlaw once again. Try to change. Superman. Will be with us while he can. In the land of make-believe."*



Heed those words. Let them ring in your head like 28 tiny wisdom bells as you prepare to enter an altogether different '*land of make-believe*'. The fairytale world of *Ecstatica II* beckons: are you '*superman*' enough to enter?



Specs: Win95 only
Pentium 8Mb RAM
Controls: Keyboard, Gamepad

Cursor keys	Movement
Ctrl	Attack (NN – try combining it with different keys, because there are shitloads of moves)
Alt	Roll/Dodge (when combined with a direction key)
Shift	Jump
Space	Search/Pick up object weapon (keep an eye out for better weapons!)
Esc	Options menu (you can alter the resolution from here if it's too slow on your machine)

PSSST! – If you're wondering what that sparkly thing at the start is, it's a teleport point. Don't go near it until it stops shimmering (which it won't, until you've done enough murdering).

HOW TO PLAY Here's the brief: You're a prince. You're searching for a kidnapped princess (that's Ecstatica, innit?). To open doors, make like the Sweeny and smash 'em in with your foot or your sword. Likewise the various chests and trunks you'll find dotted around the place. Potions can restore your strength. Sometimes you'll need to murder a set number of beasties in order to progress. Oh, and inspect the scenery carefully – especially if you think you've come to a dead end.

Okay? Look, stop reading *right now* and simply get stuck into this incredible playable demo. It should give you an ample taste of what may well turn out to be one of the best games of 1997. And when you're done, read our preview on page 34 and drool some more.

Destruction Derby 2

(Psygnosis)



Imagine a world in which human beings are indestructible, and motor cars cost 50p each. Now there's an idea for a film. Or, for that matter, a game. Say 'hello' to our exclusive demo version of *Destruction Derby 2*. It's time to don your driving leathers and swerve around like a raging psychopath as Psygnosis deliver the follow-up to their popular stock car racing game.

The original game suffered from courses that were a little flat and repetitive – whereas this hi-octane sequel features twisty rolling tracks, replete with nightmarish ramps that toss your car into the air with the same carefree abandon Godzilla inevitably displays each time he encounters a packed Tokyo commuter train. Bits of cars flying all over the shop is the watchword here; at times it's like driving through a scrapyard during a large explosion. A right-old smash-up and no mistake.

In this demo you've got a single level to bomb around – the full release offers far, far more in the way of courses, options, cars and playing modes. Sadly, though, there's no sign of a level where you get to knock Phil Collins down at 97mph, then reverse over his head again and again and again. Maybe in *DD3*?

Specs: DOS/Win95 Pentium 8Mb RAM



Controls:

A	Brrrm, brrrrm
Z	Screeeeeeecch
<	Left
>	Right, right, right, RIGHT!
F1	Change view
Esc	The big bad options menu

FANCY A CORKSCREW, LOVE? There's a wicked bit in the middle of the demo course where you can make the car do a bloody great big barrel roll in the air. You know that film they just banned, right? That 'Crash' film? Well, there's a bit in that where they do a barrel roll and they're having sex at the same time, yeah, and they crash into a wall and they're all on fire and dead and bleeding and stuff, but they're still *at it.* No really. I read about it in the 'Daily Mail' so it must be true. They printed the lot, in explicit detail, in that big article they did about why the film should be banned.

A-10 Cuba (Activision)



Yo, whussup, Snoop Doggy Dogg in th' house. I'm here to tell y'all about *A-10 Cuba*, the flight sim game, you know what I'm sayin? It's tha *real deal,* homes, you hear? It's like *bitchin'* an' shit. You climb into this big jackass aeroplane and you're like boom! Up in tha air, flying all over th' place and swoopin' all over an' shit. Dope.

But you all don't need be listenin' to me busting yo' ears on this damn thing, you need be *playin'* this shit, you know what I'm sayin? Yo, jus' install this here demo on your hard drive an' shit. See it with your own eyes. Yo, I'm outta here. Stay real.

Specs: Win95 Only Pentium 8Mb RAM

Aircraft Controls

, / .	Rudder Left/Right
Slash (/)	Rudder Reset
F/D	Flaps Up / Down
G	Gear Up/Down
0	Mickey you're so fine, you're so fine you blow my mind.
ALT+E	Adjust seat height (by a couple of thousand feet)
[/]	Elevator Trim Up/Down
Shift+ {or }	Rudder Trim Left / Right
Spacebar	Ground/Speed Brakes

Instrument Panel

B	Radar/Barometric HUD Altitude Toggle
H	RWR Hand-Off (Whatever the hell that is)
L	Cockpit Illumination. Ahh, lovely.
S	SAS ON/OFF
9	HUD Mode Rotate Counter-Clockwise
0	HUD Mode Rotate Clockwise
Caps Lock	Cursor Hot-Key Lock
Backspace	Target Deselect
ALT+I	Panel Toggle

Views

1	Cockpit View
2	Panel View
3	Chase View
4	Friendly View
5	Enemy View
6	Tower View
7	Weapon View
8	Upskirt View
R R	Rear View

Weapons/Stores

C	Cannon Rate High/Low
M	Master Arm
E	ECM ON/OFF
Semicolon (;)	Chaff
Apostrophe (')	Flare
F1-F11	Select Station 1-11
F12	Clear All Stations
Enter	Target Select/Weapons Release
Backspace	Target Deselect
Tab	Cycle HUD Targets
Alt+J	Jettison All Stores
Alt+L	Dance, little lady, dance.

Engine

Hyphen (-)	Throttle Down
Plus Sign (+)	Throttle Up
Shift+Hyphen (-)	Throttle Minimum/OFF
Shift+Plus Sign (+)	Throttle Maximum
Z	Extinguish Left
X	Extinguish Right

Navigation

T	TOUCAN
A	Autopilot
Esc	Tactical Map
W	Cycle Waypoint

Clock

N	+30minutes
Shift+N	-30minutes

Scorcher (Scavenger/GT Interactive)

You know those 'Atlasphere' things they sometimes have on 'American Gladiators'? Well, I don't know if they have them in the British version, because I can't sit through the opening titles without attempting suicide (only last week I tried to slash my throat open with a Stanley knife, and that was just because it was on the telly in the window of Dixons as I walked past), but they're basically big wireframe balls that the hapless contestants climb into, and then roll around in. Why they'd want to do this is anyone's guess; perhaps they're a bit backward or easily led. Anyway, *Scorcher* is a racing game in which you find yourself inside something similar, hurtling through a selection of tortuous courses like a gigantic marble with its arse on fire. Weird, eh?

There are two tracks in this demo, one of which is very complex and scary indeed. The action speaks for itself. Oh, and for a laugh, try mucking around with the various detail options (of which there are plenty).



Specs: DOS/Win95 Pentium 8Mb RAM

Controls:	Gamepad or keyboard
Up/down	Speed/brake
Left/right	Like, duuuh.
Shift	Change between views
Tab	Field of view
Alt	Boost
Ctrl	Jump

F-22 Lightning II (NovaLogic)

Chocks away! We have lift off! Et cetera! Yes, beloved readers, it's time for you to zoom up, up and away in a beautiful piece of state-of-the-art killing airborne killing technology. Like *A-10 Cuba*, we've covered this in detail elsewhere in this very issue. Oh yeah, and we gave away a keyboard template back in Issue 45, so we won't waste any time reprinting all the keyboard commands here, so there's just a few to get you goin'. Astute pilots will notice a complete lack of enemy bogies in this demo – but don't worry. Your bloodlust *will* be satiated. You'll just have to pick a fight with whoever's nearby, that's all. This makes it a bit like a scrap down the local lager pit, only up in the sky, and with a higher incidence of people hurtling towards the ground in flames. As ever, bear in mind that the full version has so much more neat stuff in it, it'll make your head spin around until it snaps off your shoulders and rolls under the table.

Specs: DOS/Win95 Pentium 8Mb RAM
Controls: Keyboard/Mouse/Joystick

Cursors	Direction
SPACE	Fire selected weapon
Period (.)	Afterburner
F	Flaps On/Off
G	Gear up/Down
Thrust	5-9 (0-100%)
Weapon Select	1-4



MechWarrior 2: Mercenaries (Activision)





More explicit robot-on-robot action, with this demonstration slice of the all-singing, all-dancing Windows 95 edition of Activision's popular mech 'em up. If you ever wanted to know just how Metal Mickey would handle himself in a scrap, here's the golden opportunity you've be straining for. Keep an eye out for the zany DirectX installation routine, courtesy of those loveable Nazis at Microsoft.

Specs: Win95 Only Pentium 8Mb RAM
Controls:

Weapons

Spacebar	Fire
Enter	Select Weapon/Group
****	Chain-Fire/Group-Fire Toggle
P	Alpha Strike
Shift+1-5	Add Weapon to Group 1-5
Num Lock, /, * (Keypad), ; K	Fire Group 1, 2, 3 Fire Current Group Jettison Ammunition

Targeting

T	Cycle Through All Targets
R	Previous Target
E	Target Nearest Enemy
F	Target Friendly (Lancemate)
Q	Target Object Underneath Reticle
I	Inspect Targeted Object
Ctrl+T	Targeting OFF

Hud Systems

F1	Cycle through Multi-Function Display

Displays

F2	Radar Display (Normal/Full Screen/OFF)
F5	Damage Display
F6	Armour Damage HTAL (Head/Torso/Arms/Legs)
F11	Enable/Disable/Save/HUD
F12	Objectives/Briefing Summary
U	Remove Cockpit

Camera

F4	Target View
F7	Rear View
F8	Down View
F9	Weapon View
F10	Weapon View (Full Screen, After Launch)

Mech Piloting

1 to 0	Direct Throttle (Stop to 100%)
+/-	Increase/Decrease Throttle
Left arrow, Right arrow	Steer Left and Right
Backspace	Reverse Direction
< and >	Torso Twist
/	Recentre Torso
M	Recentre Legs to Torso
J	Jump Jet (on applicable Mechs)
6-Keys (Home Keypad)	Jump Jet Steering and Turning
N	Select NAV Point
A	Autopilot ON/OFF
V	MASC ON/OFF
S	Manual Shutdown/Restart
O	Override Automatic Thermal Shutdown
Ctrl+Alt+E	Pilot Ejection
Ctrl+E	Auto-Ejection ON/OFF
Ctrl+Alt+X	Self-Destruct

Pilot View Controls

Z	Zoom In
Shift+Z	Zoom Out
Ctrl+Z	Reset Zoom Magnification
Keypad 7, 9	Glance Left, Right
Ctrl+Arrows	Pilot Eye Control
L	Thermal Optics
F3	Satellite Uplink ON/OFF
X	Radar/Satellite Uplink Zoom In
Shift+X	Radar/Satellite Uplink Zoom Out
C	External Tracking Camera (XTC) ON/OFF
Ctrl+Arrows	External Camera Controls

Non-Game Controls

Esc	Options/Battle Parameters
Ctrl+P	Snap a Screenshot
Ctrl+Q	Abort/Exit Mission

*There are additional commands and functions in the full version of the game. Go figure.

Skynet (Bethesda/VIE)



Bethesda deliver their latest *Terminator* licence – and surprise, surprise, it's a bit *Quake*-esque. Aha – or is it? Well, *SkyNET*'s got loads of stuff that the big *Q* hasn't. Controllable vehicles? You betcha. Bit more interested now, aren't you?

Two single-player, and one multiplayer level in this demo – oh, and check out the keyboard commands before you start, because they're a little 'unconventional' (ie. not identical to *Doom*'s). Posh computer owners may wish to select the 640x480 resolution before they begin, because it looks far prettier in that mode.

Specs: DOS/Win95 Pentium 8Mb RAM

Mouse	Turn Left/Right
Mouse	Look Up/Down
Left Mouse Button	Fire
Right Mouse Button	Throw
A	Forward
Z	Back
X	Slide Right
SHIFT	Slide Left
ALT	Run Left
S	Jump
C	Crouch
P	Pogo
TAB	Automap
ESC	Menu
F6	Full Screen
F7	Decrease Brightness
F8	Increase Brightness
F9	Toggle Sight

Weapons

1	Pipe/Motion Tracker
2	Uzi/Assault Rifle/Machine Gun
3	Shotgun/Chinese Burn
4	Grenade Launcher
5	Rocket Launcher/Dead Arm
6	Laser Rifle/Cannon
7	Phased Plasma Pistol/Rifle/Cannon
8	Barbed Insult
9	Phlegm Glob / Rolled-Up Newspaper
F1	Molotov
F2	Pipe Bomb
F3	Grenade
F4	Cannister Bomb
F5	Satchel Charge
F6	Water Balloon

Star Control 3 (Warner)



The game of intergalactic conquest and incessant dogfighting racks up its third instalment. This time the action is viewed in SuperVGA-o-Scope instead of Block-a-Vision, but apart from that it's more or less business as usual. Except that there are loads more expensive spacefaring vehicles to blow up and things. This demonstration will let you pootle around in one-player mode for a little while – those in the know will just bypass that bit completely and leap headfirst into the bitchin' two-player HyperMelee game instead – because it's the dog's atlaspheres.

In the full version you get 25 ships to choose from. Here there are only seven, but it's more than enough to get started with. Pay special attention to each craft's special weapon, and *do* try to avoid colliding with the planets, since it isn't polite to wipe out entire civilisations in the blink of an eye.

Specs: DOS/Win95 SVGA 486DX2-66 8Mb

Default Controls:	**Player One**	**Player Two**
Left	(left arrow)	C
Thrust	(up arrow)	V
Right	(right arrow)	B
Primary Weapon	CTRL	X
Secondary Weapon/ Special Ability	ALT	Z

Simpsons Cartoon Studio (Electronic Arts)

This fun application is sort of like a 90s take on *Fuzzy Felt*. Slap some Springfieldians onto a pretty background, and then make the lot of them move around. You can add music and sound effects too. Okay, so it's a bit limited, but it's still a useful introduction to animation basics for the little ones.

Check out the helpfile when you get confused.

Specs: Win 95 only Pentium 8Mb RAM

Simpsons Screen Saver (BMG)

Comin' at you from Berkeley, the people responsible for the acclaimed *After Dark* series of screensavers, is this demonstrative digital souffle of Simpson-related shenanigans. The full product features over 40 of your favourite characters including Bart, Homer, Mr. Burns, Itchy and Scratchy, Granpa, and more.

Specs: Win95

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Distributed by BMG Interactive Entertainment, a division of BMG Entertainment, Bedford House, 69-79 Fulham High Street, London SW6 3JW

Oddballz (Mindscape)

P.F. Magic go all weird on us and create a selection of surreal desktop-dwelling animals, some of which are downright eerie. I reckon they're all on drugs. Curious? Then check it out, you big hairy hunk of man, you.

Specs: Win95 only Pentium 8Mb RAM **Controls:** Mouse

Rebel Runner (Microforum)

Time for a little more shareware platform game action, folks. God alone knows what the storyline behind *Rebel Runner* is – maybe it's about a bloke who really needs to go to the toilet, but the nearest one is two hundred miles away, and there are loads of monsters after him. And he can shoot fire out of his hands. It's shareware, so you know the drill. Next.

Specs: DOS/Win95 Pentium 8Mb RAM

Controls:

Cursors	Move around and jump and stuff
Ctrl	Shoot fire out of your hands like a wuss.

Jack Nicklaus Course Designer (Accolade)

Speaks for itself, really. It's a course designer for *Jack Nicklaus Golf*. The README.TXT file contains loads more information, not to mention a few headings which made me snigger, because I'm puerile. Loads of stuff about "manually creating a hole", and "adjusting your hole", and "moving and rotating your hole". Basically, I laughed every time they used the word 'hole'.

Anyway – it's a demo, and as such it only lets you tinker about with a maximum of three holes (tee hee). To get truly stuck into a full 18-hole marathon (chortle), you'll need to get the full version.

Specs: Win95 Only Pentium 8Mb RAM

Xargon: Beyond Reality (Epic Mega Games)

Er, right. Um. It's a platform game, okay? Starring a bloke with big hair, who seems to be blessed with the ability to fire icicles out of his, you know, *thingy*. This is episode one of the full game; if you want to get hold of the remaining parts, read the VENDOR.DOC file.

Specs: DOS/Win95 8Mb RAM

Controls:

Cursors	Left/Right
Alt	Jump like a frolicking pantomime dame
Shift	Shoot in the aforementioned comical manner.

Trophy Bass 2 (Sierra)

Don't laugh, because it's actually quite good fun. Try it out and see for yourself. Incidentally, I'd be wary of *eating* any fish that you catch (especially as part of a romantic dinner for two), because with all this food poisoning about at the moment, steering well clear of seafood is a pretty good bet. Still, here's a lovely song to sing to your loved one, after the two of you have eaten some infected fish and you think you're about to start throwing up and stuff...

BANGLE-LONGA BASS

(To the tune of 'Eternal Flame')

"Close your eyes,
Give me your hand - Darling,
Do you feel my heart beating?
Do you understand?
Do you feel the same?
Am I only dreaming?
Or is this bleeding
And internal pain?"

Specs: Win 3.1/95 Pentium 8Mb RAM **Controls:** Mouse

ESSENTIALS Right, this time round we really *have* put Paint Shop Pro version 4 onto the CD – along with loads of other new things. How does Norton Crash Guard grab you? It intercepts those nasty General Protection Faults and the like, and stops them in their jolly old tracks.

CYBERTWATS: AN APOLOGY I'd just like to point out that this particular episode was completed *before* The Spice Girls gave *that* interview to 'The Spectator', wherein they turned out to be nought but a gang of empty-headed right-wing bimbettes, instead of the sassy, loveable rogues we'd assumed they were. Sigh. I should've drawn *them* being torn to pieces instead...

Create your own tracks with your PC



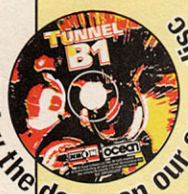
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Tunnel B1



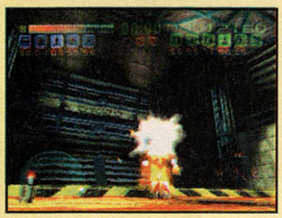
Play the demo on our cover disc

To install the software on this month's *Tunnel B1* demo CD, under Windows go to your CD drive and double click on the INSTALL.BAT file. This will set up the sound. Double click on DEMO.BAT to run the game.

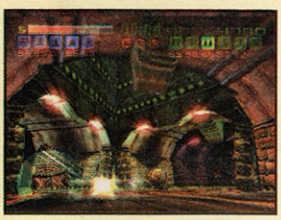
THOSE OF YOU WITH FULLY-FUNCTIONING 20/20 EYESIGHT can't possibly have failed to notice a 100% increase in the number of CDs strapped to the front of this particular issue of the world's finest magazine. If we carry on showering you with gifts, people will say we're 'an item'. You'll need to hide us under the bed each time your loved one comes in. We'll check into classy countryside hotels under the name "Mr and Magazine Smith". Life will degenerate to the level of bawdy farce – but through it all, we'll find true love.



Er, anyway. Back to *Tunnel B1*. It's really pretty incredible. Jaw-dropping, in fact. Some of the finest visuals you could wish for. Here's the deal: you've got to fly this snappy little spaceship-cum-hovercraft thing into a great big tunnel and destroy a bunch of reactors lurking therein. Once that's done, you go on to the next stage. Simple, eh?



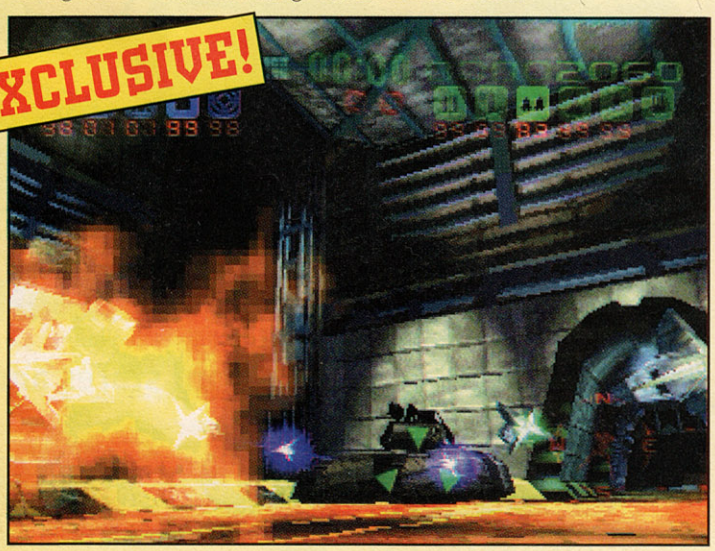
Well, er, no, actually. It's far from simple. We didn't mention the amount of *peril* you'll encounter. There are loads of laser turrets, grenade launchers and mobile robotic defence systems doing their utmost to kill you. You'll need to take them out as quickly as possible. Then there's the radio-active crates to consider. Destroy one and a vital power-up will appear, with a countdown over its head. Fail to collect it in time and things get nasty, in a searing-irradiated-death kind of way. So be careful.



And what's more, destroying the reactors is quite tricky. Just a few seconds after they start to blow, a set of emergency blast doors will close, severing them from the rest of the complex. For God's sake make sure you're on the right side when meltdown occurs. Oh, and you'll have to destroy several of them, within a set period of time, in order to escape. Take too long and they repair themselves, forcing you to go back and knock 'em out again.

Check out the map if you get lost, and do take the time to try out all the different weapons. Still confused? Then sit back and watch the rolling demo – it'll make things far, far clearer. Smart!

EXCLUSIVE!



Ask Sigmund Freud...

So struck were we by *Tunnel B1*'s innate symbolism, we pulled out all the stops to track down the founding father of cod-psychology, Dr Sigmund Freud, and ask him a couple of questions. Here's what the man responsible for putting the 'anal' into 'analysis' had to say...

Zone: Wotcha Freud! 'Ow's it goin', hawight?
Freud: Ja. I am badly decomposed, but aside from zis, I haf no complaints.
Zone: Wicked. Anyway, 'ave a gander at this 'ere game thing, innit?
Freud: Mmmm, most fascinating. A game about ein *tunnel*, ja? Furzermore, ein tunnel into vich ze player must guide ein long, probe-like vehicle. Hmmm. Und zen he must deposit his payload into ein throbbing, womb-like reactor, tucked avay deep inside. I find zis most interesting.
Zone: What's the verdict then, eh? Eh? Yer dead bugger, yer.
Freud: I zink it is ein zubconscious metaphor for ze zexual act. Zis 'spacecraft' clearly reprezents ze phallus, und ze tunnel ze vagina. Ze aim is for ze male to zuccessfully fertilise ze female egg.
Zone: And the radioactive crates?
Freud: Vot?
Zone: What do the radioactive crates represent, eh?
Freud: Vot is zis word, zis 'radioactif'? I am not familiar vith zis term.
Zone: Oh *forget it*! (Slams coffin lid, leaves cemetery in a hurry.)



Controls

You can control the game with a joystick, or that unwieldy 128-button gamepad you call a keyboard.

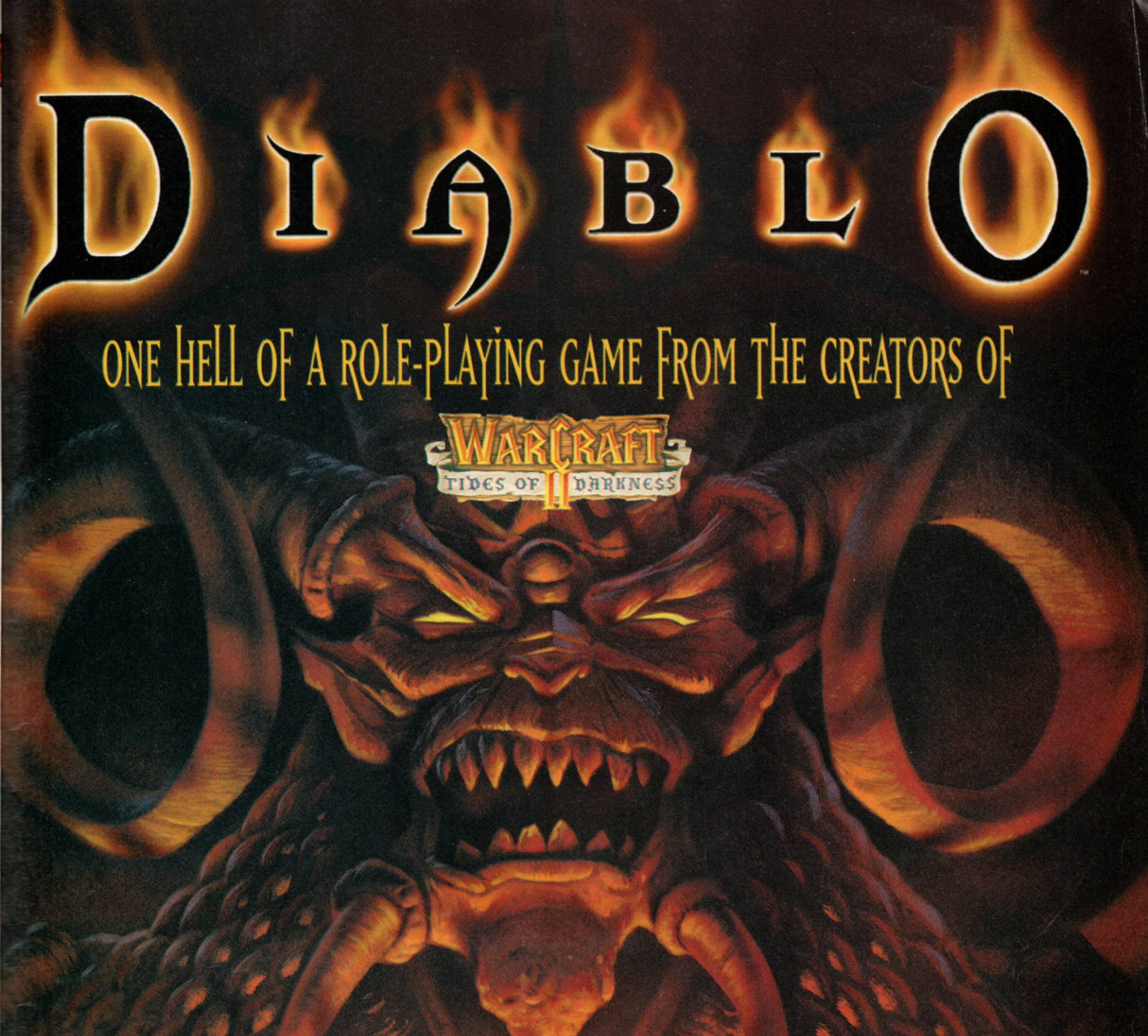
Keys:

A or Cursor Up	Hurtle onward, ever onward, like some kind of will o' the wisp racing against the Devil himself.
Z or Cursor Down	Concentrate your efforts upon accelerating in a direction diametrically opposed to the one you were pursuing a few moments earlier.
< or Cursor Left	Adjust the camber of your vehicle, until its incline lies in favour of the port flank.
> or Cursor Right	Deviate from your present course, toward an imaginary goal upon your starboard side.
Ctrl	Unleash a formidable salvo of ammunition, enough to test the most iron of wills. We'll thwart their dastardly schemes yet, sir!
Space	Bombard the confounded horde with one of your secondary weapons; an incendiary projectile or grenade shall soon put a stop to their merry dance, sir, just you see if it doesn't.
Alt	Deceive the opposition by depressing this key, then directing your craft with either the port or starboard controls. Aha! An artful ruse, such as will see you crowned King of the subterranean helmsmen, and may God strike me dumb if it isn't so, sir. Dumb, sir, dumb.
Tab	Consult your auto-map; an elegant delineation, effortlessly representing your surroundings in a fashion that is every bit as utilitarian as the situation demands, without losing any of its congenital aesthetic charm.
Ins/Del	Leaf through a jolly collection of disparate weapon upgrades.
PgUp/PgDn	Browse at leisure through the various projectile defences at your disposal.
P	Induce a brief cessation of duties; time enough to usher the ladies from the room and concentrate your powers upon the task at hand.

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Boldly going forwards...

'Star Trek' fans will be well catered for in 1997, what with *Generations, Borg, First Contact* and Interplay's *Star Trek: Starfleet Academy*.

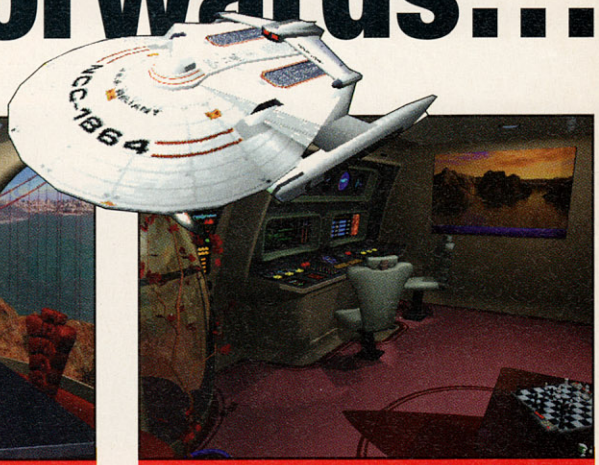
THOSE OF YOU WHO HAVE ALWAYS DREAMT OF stepping into Captain Kirk's pointy boots to take the helm of the USS Enterprise can (a) get a life, and (b) now do so, courtesy of Interplay when *Star Trek: Starfleet Academy* hits the shelves early in the new year.

Starfleet Academy is currently being described as the first ever "Star Trek flight simulator" and could prove serious competition to *X-Wing Versus TIE Fighter* when they simultaneously hit the shelves in March.

The game is based in and around Starfleet headquarters in the Presido, San Francisco, where hopeful cadets are trained to become Starfleet officers. Leadership training focuses around the famous SFA bridge simulator where you and your crew will battle over 30 alien ships, including the cloaked Klingon Bird of Prey to the gigantic Romulan heavy cruiser. So far, 27 missions are planned – all of them filled with sub-plots, internal politics, sacrifices and harsh decision-making that will impact not only on the player but also on the cadet class and Starfleet itself. *Starfleet Academy* promises to be quite open-ended in play; how you perform in previous missions affecting the path through the game, and there are three different endings to discover as a result.



Presido, San Francisco – home to Starfleet HQ and the location of your officer training course. Tuh, back to college again!



After a hard day on the SFA combat simulator, it's back to the pre-rendered confines of your quarters for a game of chess.

Interplay are going hell for leather in the authenticity stakes. The game script is being written by Trek stalwarts Dan Greenberg, Andrew Greenberg and Bill Bridge, with a full musical score composed by Dennis McCarty, whose previous credits include a couple of the 'Star Trek' movies, plus 'Deep Space Nine' and 'Next Generation' TV episodes. Most significant of all, though, is the appearance of the original cast in the many full motion video segments liberally interspersed throughout the missions. William Shatner (Kirk), Walter Koenig (Chekov) and George Takei (Sulu) reprise their well-worn roles, and, because the game is set around the time of the later movies, there's been no need to spruce up their tardiness with expensive special effects. Corsets obviously suffice.

A stunning array of fully light-sourced 3D graphics are set to bring the 'Star Trek' universe to life in the depths of space, with high-resolution, pre-rendered control screens (looking surprisingly familiar) linking the whole game together in an aesthetically pleasing manner. On top of all this, *Starfleet Academy* is to support head-to-head modem and network play – with up to eight players allowed in on the latter option.

All things considered, *Star Trek: Starfleet Academy* should be a cracking sci-fi shoot 'em up, and if the game is well received by PC gamesplayers we wouldn't be surprised to see *Star Trek: Klingon Academy* later in the year...

For more information just pay a visit to http://www.interplay.com. Z



Witness the legendary USS Enterprise in all its glory. And, guess what? You get to fly it too! Wheeeeeeeee!



The crew of the USS Enterprise find the Great Bum-Hole of the Universe and are in danger of being gassed to oblivion.



Proton torpedo taken up the Gary Glitter by unsuspecting Bird of Prey. That'll teach it to mess with a seeming unarmed freighter.



There you are minding your own business, exploring bits of space, when three cloaked Klingons appear before your very eyes.

Myst sequel in pipeline

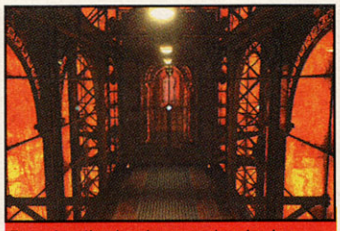
Summer '97 will see a second instalment in Cyan's much lauded *Myst* series.



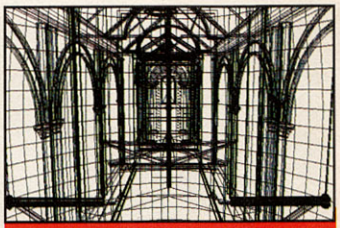
Will *Riven* be a huge departure from *Myst*, or are we in for more of the same pre-rendered snooziness?



Always keep a book by the side of your bed so that you can record your dreams when you wake up. Or not.



Every location has been rendered using the latest in 3D modelling technology. To the right is the unrendered version.



Here's the extra special X-ray specs mode. You can see through women's clothes if you try hard enough.

WHILE AMERICA'S INFATUATION WITH THE original *Myst* still confounds the best of us over here, Cyan are nevertheless linking up with Broderbund to create a mega-bucks sequel of seemingly gigantic proportions. *Riven*, as it is to be called, is currently shrouded under a veil of secrecy, so full details at present are sketchy.

So far we know that *Riven* takes up where *Myst* left off, but as far as storylines go the development blokes at Cyan aren't saying much. They are, of course, mouthing off enthusiastically about how great the original was, and how much better the follow-up will be. Rand Miller, president-type guru demonstrated this by saying:

"Except for the fact that Cyan this time has five times the people, ten times the budget and 500 times the computing power, *Riven* is being created with the same attitude which drove *Myst*; to create what we would consider to be the most immersive experience possible on a computer.

"We don't want *Riven* to simply be another sequel. We want to drive the story-telling potential of interactive entertainment notably forward. *Myst*'s success has provided the resources to create an experience that is a worthy successor to *Myst* and a product we previously could only have dreamt of creating."

Okay, so these shots may give little away, but at least there's no doubt it will *look* completely amazing when it's finished. Whether Cyan stick with the pump flick-screen style of presentation is anyone's guess – a 3D world with full freedom of movement is what we're looking for. Anything else and *Riven* could end up being criticised for being just another *Myst*-style game. Which would hardly do, would it?

Anyway, to explore the facts further you have a choice of either **http://www.broderbund.com**, or **http://www.cyan.com**. Z



Amazing! Cyan seem to have based this location on the design of my bedroom! Looks exactly like it. Honest. Any gorgeous women interested in comparing the two call... shit, out of space!

The Hexagon Cartel take over



Fight future crime in *The Hexagon Cartel*, the latest in a line of Jane's flight combat simulators.

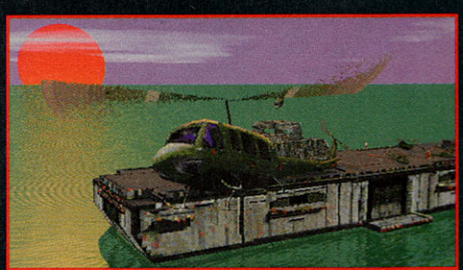
EA'S JANE'S SIMULATIONS ARE GATHERING A formidable reputation among flight sim fans – and quite rightly too, what with their high degree of realism and shockingly good graphics. Those of you following the progress of the range will be pleased to learn that a new title called *The Hexagon Cartel* is on its merry way early in the new year.

A change in world order has opened borders across the land, prompting an increase in crime through opportunities offered by the opening of the Eastern Bloc. The Russian Mafia, joining ranks with the Italian 'Camorra' and the Columbian syndicates, are running riot like the bad lads they are, forming a new crime cartel known as 'Hexagon' in the process. Establishing centres in all major territories, the national police forces have lost control of the situation.

In order to regain mastery, the governments of the industrial nations form an elite international force incorporating the best pilots in the world. This force, called The United Navy, is a helicopter-based outfit which has only one target – The Hexagon Cartel itself.

And, as a pilot in The United Navy, this is where you come in. Using a variety of different choppers (Blackhawk, Super Cobra, Apache, AH64, MD500, CH53 Super Jolly, Sea King, Bell 222, Bell UH1 and Witchride), you and your team fight it out with the Cartel over 50 interlinked missions in five different scenarios. A huge landscape modelled to a scale of 100x100 miles has also been promised, as has a physically accurate flight model and loads and loads of other surprises.

'Schmells gut', as they say. *The Hexagon Cartel* will be out in March, but until then, read more about it at **http://www.ea.com/janes**. Z



"Aw, look at the lovely sunset," he said, as the Exocet arrived at high speed from within the blinding glare...

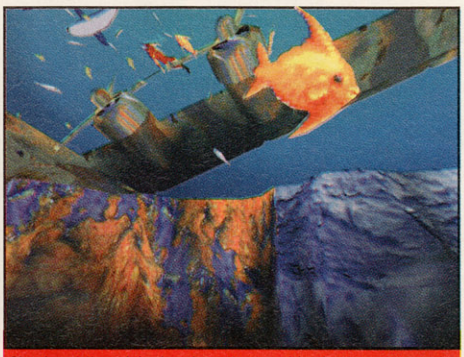


Choosing the right chopper for the right mission is of high importance. This thing is useful for reconnaissance missions.

Voracious little Scavengers



Tarantula: Alright, who's nicked the last of the bog roll? Was it you down there, you ratty bast?!



Check out the wicked underwater graphics in *Aqua*. What's it gonna take to run this game at a reasonable pace?

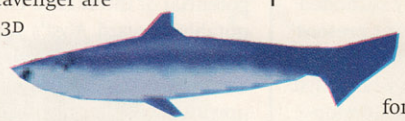
Eight good reasons why you should keep an eye on *Scavenger* this year.

LA-BASED GAME CODERS SCAVENGER HAVE been well busy of late. At the moment they're adding the fihishing touches to *Amok* and *Scorcher*, both of which will be reviewed next issue, and *Into The Shadows* is currently coming together quite nicely too. On top of these three come eight new announcements, all of which are deep in development and should be released in 1997.



Tarantula (not to be confused with *Spider* on the PlayStation) will not be a game for the arachnaphobes among us, it being a simulation of the life of an eight-legged hairy monster spider and all that. Scavenger are using a sophisticated 3D engine for the game and already the graphics are looking absolutely fabulous (daahling...), as you can see from the screenshot above.

As far as scuba diving adventures go, *Aqua* looks like it will shoot right to the very top of the pile (not that the pile is particularly mountainous or anything) and again is graphically stunning in a funky kinda 3D way. Explore sunken ships, hidden caves and ditched planes as the various aquatic lifeforms try their very best to eat you.



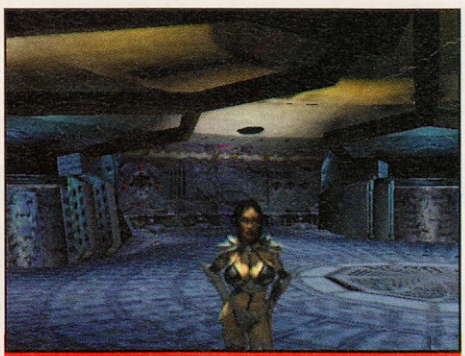
Spanish Blood injects a little 'ooh arr Jim lad!' into the Scavenger range as a sort of *Alone In The Dark*-style pirate adventure which again features that ubiquitous 3D engine (though no bad thing) and vast amounts of soap for scrubbing the deck. Probably.

Later in the year Scavenger should release more information about five other titles that they have announced, but are unfortunately keeping tight-lipped about: *Terminus* will appeal to fetish fanciers (apparently!); *Angel* will take the player into the world of the paranormal; there'll be a chance to go space walking in the astro adventure *Gemini*; *Pyro* is to brace the subject of fire-fighting; and *Sniper* is a cops and robbers shoot 'em up. So plenty to look forward there, then.

Although a UK distributor has yet to be announced for these new titles, one thing we can confirm is that it *won't* be GT Interactive, who are handling Scavenger's first three titles over here. Watch this space... Z



Take to the real-time rendered high seas in *Spanish Blood*. Hoist the Jolly Roger and keep an eye out for easy prey.



The strange world of *Terminus* – where people parade around in a tantalising mixture of lingerie and body armour.



Get your diving gear around this! Having a Killer Whale of a time in Scavenger's *Aqua*.

Fresh as the moment...

...when the POD went pop! Terrible intro, granted, but we couldn't resist it.

HAVING JUST COMPLETED THEIR PC CONVERSION OF *STREET Racer* (a big hit on the SNES about five hundred years ago), Ubisoft are working on *POD*, a futuristic racing game with graphics to die for. If you can imagine *Screamer 2* with futuristic scenery and tons of cars to choose from, you're not a million miles away from what Ubisoft are setting out to achieve with *POD*. The early version of the game we saw was looking very smooth indeed, and the frame rate was quite astonishing considering the highly detailed graphics. All the cars in the game can be customised according to your own tastes and Ubisoft are hoping people will be designing their own cars and challenging people to a couple of laps over the Internet. We'll bring you a full preview of the game next issue, when it will hopefully be nearing completion. For more info, contact Ubisoft on 0181 944 9000. Z



The texture-mapped batteredness of the future, as seen in Ubisoft's new racing game *POD*.



Aaaargh, there's a bloody huge spider in my way! Stamp on it! Kill it! Etc etc.

VENGEANCE IS HIS



NO FLESH SHALL BE SPARED

MARK 13:20

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ZOMBIE™
Virtual Reality Software

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Website: http://www.gtinteractive.com

Bad title day

Thankfully, *Have A N.I.C.E. Day* is only the working title of 21st Century Entertainment's newly announced racing game cum shoot 'em up due out in the Spring.

HAVING SEEN AND PLAYED AN EARLY VERSION we're more than happy to report that this tantalising mixture of *Hard Drivin'*, *Quarantine*, *Destruction Derby* and, erm, *Ridge Racer* is looking pretty smart. *Have A N.I.C.E. Day* is a full-on shoot-the-other-cars-if-they-get-in-your-way type of racing game with original, challenging tracks constructed of massive loop-the-loops, severe bumps and suchlike. Graphically, it looks and plays rather like *Destruction Derby* – the course is contained in a walled-off arena, there are plenty of twists, turns, chicanes and fancy trackery-pokery – but race meets are spiced up with an array of lethal in-car weaponry ranging from hood-mounted chainguns to rockets. Three different cars (with a variety of interesting and colourful paint jobs) are available, with no less than 24 tracks taking the player through Egypt, Chicago, the Arctic, China, Desert and Maya regions in day and night conditions.

We'll be ready waiting on the grid for a full preview in the very near future, so start warming up your engine now. Z



Yee haw! Make like Sheriff J W Pepper as you tear down the track on just two wheels.



Ridge Racer-esque tunnels are mildly sedate compared to the rest of the track.



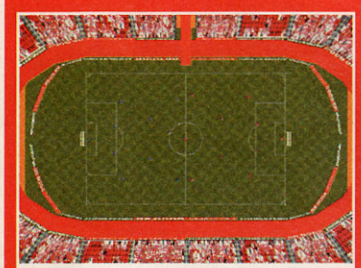
There are 12 tracks over six scenarios with day and night missions – making 24 in total.



Jump coming up… approach straight on, accelerate, then close your eyes and pray.

Netting a winner

Cranberry Source's new football game is not, as the rumours would have us believe, going to be called *Match Day 3*. Which is a shame (sniffle).



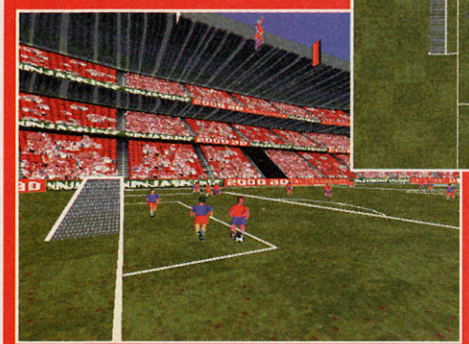
Players will be able to chase the action from every imaginable angle.

HAVING RISEN UNSCATHED, with a portfolio of successful product behind him, through the 8- and 16-bit era, Jon Ritman and his talented team at Cranberry Source are now ready to move wholeheartedly into the 32-bit footie arena with a new football game entitled *The Net*.

The Net combines texture-mapped polygons with Cranberry Source's much-lauded 'Polar Sprout' voxel sprite technology, as used to great effect in the forthcoming blast 'em up *The Quintessential Art Of Destruction*. Basically, what this means is that every player on the pitch will be made up of floating coloured pixels, rather than texture-mapped polygons as is now the norm in this sort of game. On top of this, Ritman and his team have spent a great deal of time applying complex motion capture routines to their players, so they should run around convincingly too.

To add that extra special graphical touch, the finished version of *The Net* will support a selection of 3D graphics cards. It will be published by Philips Media, who have another big football game, *UEFA Champions League*, scheduled for release in February. Z





(Left) Never before seen shots of Cranberry Source's new football game *The Net*. It's early days yet and these graphics are work in progress.

Jack Nicklaus, fore!



Ooh, look; it's one of those big swing/hit meter things! Handy for armchair golfers…

As you've probably gathered, we've got the Bad Pun Machine switched to 'full' this month… Anyway, Jack Nicklaus is back for a fourth outing from Accolade.

IN MY OPINION GOLF GAMES ARE much better than the real thing, but then as I'm a confirmed lazy bar steward it's easy to work out why: it's because they have loads of graphical bits and bobs to help you aim and gauge the weight of your shot which, of course, you don't have in the real thing. When I try to hit a straight ball down the fairway I usually end up spending two hours hunting through grass and squirrel shit for the next shot, so needless to say I don't play very often.

But enough about my ball problems – I've just seen *Jack Nicklaus 4*, the latest in a long line of golf sims from Accolade. It could be just the ticket for armchair golfers everywhere: not only does it look bloody great (for a golf game), but it also incorporates one of the best course design packages we've ever seen. In fact you can check it out for yourself – there's a demo on this month's cover CD.

Naturally you can opt to play Jack himself over five pre-built courses, from Muirfield Village Golf Club to Cabo del Sol, or you can take on your Pringle-clad mates over a network, modem or via the Internet.

A UK distributor has yet to be announced, but we'll let you know more as and when it happens. Z



Jack Nicklaus 4 comes compete with a brilliant course designer utility.



Miles away fron the hole and I'm already in the bloody rough. Where's that driver?

Shocking Thriller

for Christmas?



PHANTASMAGORIA II

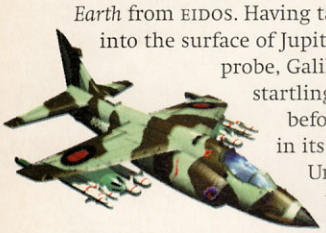
A PUZZLE OF FLESH



SIERRA®

Jupiter Attacks!

Earth is once again threatened with extinction in EIDOS' forthcoming strategy game. The only difference here is that you can cause it.



CONTINUING THE LONG, LONG, *(GET ON WITH it – Ed.)* line of *Command & Conquer*-style titles is the dramatically titled *Conquest Earth* from EIDOS. Having taken its final dive into the surface of Jupiter, NASA's space probe, Galileo, sent back some startling transmissions before finally cashing in its microchips.

Unfortunately, these transmissions were quickly followed by a psychotic race of gaseous aliens whose only purpose sure as hell wasn't to pop in for a friendly chat.

Conquest Earth has you either defending the Earth from these alien invaders or playing the part of the Jupitians (sic) as they try to convert our planet into one more suitable for their needs (ie. one that isn't littered with strange bipedal creatures with a preponderance for breathing oxygen).

Viewed in the traditional, yet much enhanced, semi-overhead perspective, *Conquest Earth* boasts photo-realistic, lightwave-rendered and fully-textured graphics, as well as audio effects created with something called Real-time Stereo Distancing – which essentially means that things get louder as they get nearer. It all adds to the atmosphere, apparently.

Even better is the issue of artificial intelligence. Data Design (the programming team) have utilised the very latest in neural networking technology to create an enemy that constantly reacts to the player's actions and learns as it goes along. The computer can lay traps, set up ambushes, create diversions and even tap into your telephone network to call you up and pretend to be your mum so it can sneakily attack your forces while you're distracted (well, almost).



Conquest Earth is due to be finished sometime in March. Let's just hope that before they're finished someone tells the boys at Data Design that creatures from Jupiter are actually called Jovians. *(Picky, picky – Ed.)*. Z



That's a gem of an elephant turd. Wonder what poor fecker had to spit and polish it?



So that's what he meant by 'gaseous aliens'. In space no-one can hear you fart?



Conventional weapons clash with hi-tech Jovian weaponry to devastating effect.



The 'organic' menus and panels look pretty smart, don't you think?

Back On The Road Again

Telstar get behind the wheel of an all-action driving sim that aims to put the fun back into mass destruction.



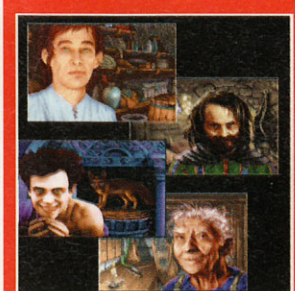
NOW THAT CHRISTMAS HAS COME AND GONE, WE CAN ONCE AGAIN GO back to ignoring all those Drive Safely messages that have become so synonymous with the festive period. And what better way to warm up than with some driving games whose sole function is to allow you to smash the hell out of other vehicles?

Wreckin Crew promises to be a blisteringly fast driving game in the best tradition of games such as *Demolition Derby*, *Carmageddon* and *F1GP2* (don't try to pretend you play it properly). Stunt tracks, 16-player network arenas and a super hi-res graphics engine that retains speed and detail all add up to the kind of game that David Cronenberg would be proud to put his name to. More information can be had from Telstar's Web site at http://www.telstar.co.uk. Z



Get those goddamn chickens outta my way – can't you see there's a race on here!

Old Man Riva...

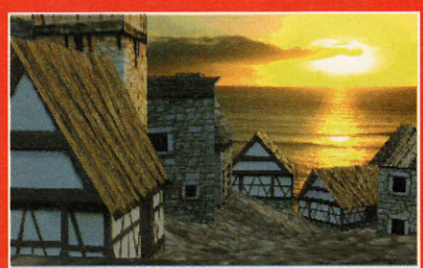


Is it me, or do these *Shadows Over Riva* characters look like they've jumped straight from an Amiga?

The long-running *Realms Of Arkania* series continues with the latest release from Attic Entertainment.

ROLE-PLAYING GAMERS ACROSS THE world finally have a chance to cry 'Huzzah!' and do little dances of joy as the long-running and highly popular *Realms Of Arkania* RPG series is soon to see a third title added to the line. *Shadows Over Riva* is set for release in February and promises to give the whole *Arkania* series a complete overhaul with a brand-new, ultra-realistic landscape creation technique that's set to deliver a level of realism that's never been achieved before in a computer RPG.

The story continues the tale from Attic Entertainment's previous *Arkania* games – *Star Trail* and *Blade Of Destiny* – with the player controlling a band of adventurers determined to discover what lies at the heart of an evil presence infecting the city of Riva. More details can be had from Manyk Ltd on 0181-542 2687. Z



Real-time 3D graphics or pre-rendered intro sequence? We have yet to find out. Nice place for a holiday...

Cal Jones - Reviews Editor
Computer Gaming World UK
"The most utterly addictive game we've ever played, it beats the opposition hands down... it's brilliant."

Dan Slingsby - Editor PC Format
"If you're desperate for a decent fix of real time strategy action and you were as disappointed in Z as we were, War Wind is definitely for you."

WAR WIND™

PC ZONE RECOMMENDED

Chris Anderson - Deputy Editor PC Zone
"If you were to ask me why I'd buy War Wind over Warcraft 2, I'd say because War Wind you'd still be playing in 3 months time, where Warcraft 2 you'd probably get fed up with after a couple of weeks, if that."

Windows 95 HOT GAME

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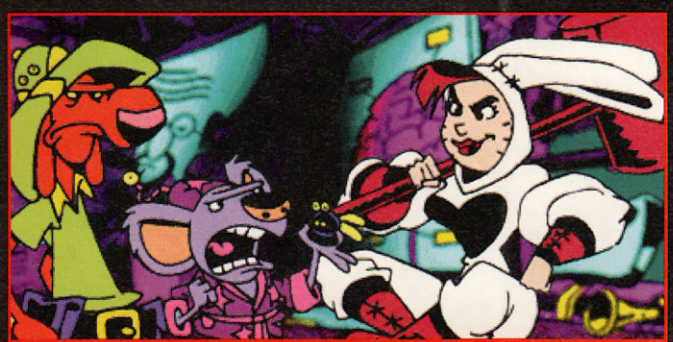
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Broderbund explode in '97

So what have Broderbund been up to for the last year, eh? Apart from the odd 'edutainment' title, they've been really quiet on the release front. 1997, however, will be different for the US software giant with seven new releases on the way.



Koala Lumpur: Journey to the Edge will no doubt be full of childish humour that will appeal to childish adults! Er, is that a pubic hare on the right?



Up to eight players will be able to fight it out head-to-head in *Warlords III* and there will even be an Internet option.

BRODERBUND'S FIRST NEW GAME of 1997 will be *The Last Express*, a mystery adventure game set on the world's most intriguing train in July 1914 on the eve of the First World War. A mixture of 3D rendering and rotoscoped animation (*where the artist draws by tracing from live action footage – Ed.*) is being used to bring the characters to life. The overall effect is similar to the animation seen in Jordan Mechner's classic *Prince of Persia*, which is no surprise when you consider that Mr Mechner is the very same fellow behind *The Last Express*.

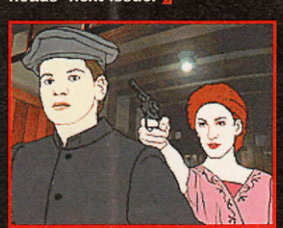
Riven, the sequel to *Myst*, we've mentioned on page 13. *Outrage*, a 3D action thriller from Raven Software, we haven't. Set in a city that has been ravaged by a nuclear strike, *Outrage* calls upon the player to explore a glowing dome at the centre of the city and discover the secret it holds. Whether or not *Outrage* uses a version of the *Quake* engine has yet to be confirmed, but we will let you know more as soon as we can.

Further announcements include *Koala Lumpur: Journey to the Edge* – an "irreverent comic adventure" set in a colourful 360-degree scrolling environment; *WarBreeds* – Broderbund's very own *C&C* clo… erm, real-time strategy game; *Warlords III* – a medieval strategy game from down under, now new and improved; and last but not least, Presto Studios' long-awaited *Journeyman Project 3*.

Net heads should seek out **http://www.broderbund.com**, and we'll have more detailed info for us 'mag heads' next issue. Z



Broderbund have a go at the real-time strategy genre in *WardBreeds*. Looks pretty neat already.



Hand over your hat, sonny – I'm sick and tired of this stupid turban.

Eradicate 'em!

Originality clearly isn't going to be found on EIDOS Interactive's list of New Year resolutions, as they plan to release the *Doom*-like *Eradicator* in January.

ERADICATOR IS BEST DESCRIBED as *Duke Nukem 3D* with knobs on, as it has the same style of gameplay, the same nonsensical storyline and a weapons fixation so embarrassingly huge that it would make a John Woo film look like an episode of 'Magic Rabbits'.

Fortunately, *Eradicator* isn't all old hat: the 25 mission-based levels can be played from either a first- or a third-person perspective, and there are over 20 different weapons to pick up – some of them extremely bizarre (not to mention innovative), such as the 'spider bomb', a remote-controlled explosive device that crawls along the ground to its target. Players can also choose between three types of character, each with their own special strengths and weaknesses, and the game will allow eight players to play via network. If that wasn't enough, the game comes bundled with a level editor.

For more info, check out http//www.eidosinteractive.com. Z



One of three characters, Dan Blaze here prefers to use a strident laser when he's working.



Ol' red eyes is back… with a beetle on his face and all. The mucky bugger.

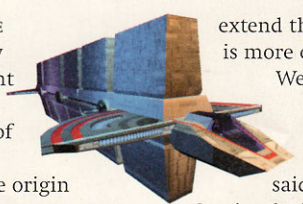


Eradicator has a third-person view and everything. *Duke Nukem 3D* anyone?

Enter the 5th Dimension

"I'm bored with these racing games," said Todd. "Let's go do something different," said Rick. So they did, and everyone lived happily ever after. In Paris, Texas. Really.

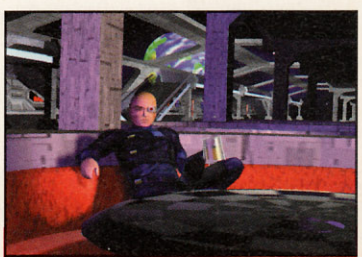
5D GAMES IS THE name of a new US development house recently formed by a group of ex-Papyrus programmers whose origin stems from the desire to create and work on entirely new game concepts, rather than on incremental changes to existing established products (surely we don't need to mention names here, do we?).



Todd Farrington, Rick Genter and Doug McCartney founded the company in July of last year and have been working hard on their first project, the recently announced sci-fi extravaganza *G-Zero* which should see the cold light of day towards the end of the summer.

"Our efforts are currently focused on refining the plot to enhance character interaction and extend the story so the player is more completely immersed. We are also structuring the missions to take advantage of *G-Zero's* unique 3D engine," said game designer Rich Curtis, playing his cards close to his chest, "and we can't wait to play it." Well, neither can we – so let us know more!

Http://www.5dgames.com is all there is for interested parties at the moment. Z



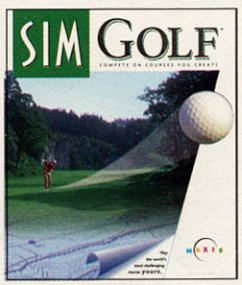
So that was three Stellas, a rum and coke, two ciders and a Blastaway for the missus?



TIRED OF THE SAME OLD LINKS?



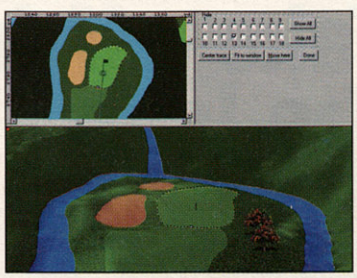
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Dispatches

ACTIVISION GET QUAKE PACKS

Activision recently announced the acquisition of two brand new official *Quake* add-on packs, one of which – the Hipnotic Interactive-developed *The Rift* – we had a brief look at in last month's news. *The Rift* contains 15 new levels packed into three blood-curdling new episodes: Fortress of the Dead, Dominion of Darkness and *The Rift*, as well as specially created deathmatch levels. The pack



Two new *Quake* packs from Activision – both with new levels, monsters and weapons!

introduces some villainous new enemies including hordes of goblins and huge scorpion creatures that deliver a nasty sting.

The second (seemingly untitled) pack, created by Rogue Entertainment, had iD themselves as executive producer and also contains 15 new levels with the player confronting such nastiness as electric eels, the Wraith, the Phantom Swordsman and a host of other new enemies. Four new weapons, including Lava Nails and Plasma Guns, add to the on-screen firework display.

Both packs will be out early in 1997 and a price has yet to be announced. "Hipnotic and Rogue have really outdone themselves with these level packs and the result is a non-stop bloodbath that will leave gamers crying for mercy," assures iD head honcho Mike Watson, but we'll let you know what we think of them in a full review next issue.

CAVED IN

Stop press news of *Avalon Hill's* latest strategy wargame *Cave Wars*, out in February from EIDOS Interactive.

Cave Wars sees you as commander of a subterranean race of warriors locked in a furious territorial battle with seven other competitors fighting for control of an underworld of corridors and caverns. Troops begin with the most primitive of weapons and magic, your only tools being a brutalised population subject to your every whim, a small supply of metal, and the minds of those dedicated to developing new tools with which to kill your enemy. Mixing magic and heavy weaponry will be the only way of undermining enemy production, and from there on in it's a 'simple' matter of destroying their remaining defences to take victory.

Look out for a full review of *Cave Wars* in an upcoming issue of *PC Zone*, but until then check out **http://www.eidosinteractive.com** for further details.

CALLING ALL INTERNET CAFES!

PC Zone is to sponsor the first national *UK Games Championships* later this year and is currently looking for participating venues for a series of regional heats in the new year, building up to an all-singing, all-dancing summer final in London.

If you're interested in participating, and your in-store hardware is capable of handling the rigours of multi-player gaming, then drop us a line at **pczone@shootnsurf.co.uk** and we'll give you all the details.

Contents may settle

Blue Byte have been busy working on a new *Settlers 2* add-on pack. And there we were thinking that all they did all day was eat sausages and boiled cabbage...

DEITY-DABBLING *Settlers 2* FANS (ESPECIALLY THE ONES WHO'VE PLAYED THROUGH THE ENTIRE GAME AND NEED more, more, more!) should look out for *Settlers 2 – The Missions CD* when it goes on release in late January. This add-on pack will include nine new maps spread across the seven continents of the world and, more importantly, will also come complete with a comprehensive map editor which will allow players to create their very own landscapes on which to nest. Deserts, tundra, mountains, forests – you name it – if it can be settled on, you can build it.

Priced at an affordable £19.99, *The Missions CD* will add infinite variety to an already outstanding game. Z





(Above) Use the map editor to rub out France and Germany from the European level?

(Left) Brand new environments appear in the mission disk (something sadly lacking in the actual game).



Battlecruiser 3000AD; a sort of cross between Frontier and Privateer – but without the bugs (we hope).

Take-off for the lads

Gametek's 'controversial' space simulator is looking ready for launch. Only adverse weather conditions can stop it now...

IN A MOVE LIKELY TO CAUSE DISMAY TO ADVERT-LOVERS everywhere, Gametek finally look set to release the long-awaited *Battlecruiser 3000 AD*, which will finally see an end to... *that* advert. *(Boo - Readers.)*

Since we last saw it, *BC3000AD* has undergone some extensive modifications to the graphics, the gameplay, the AI, the dogfighting logic, the sound effects and even the manual. About the only part of the game left untouched is the name. Gametek have also added the ability to fight on planet surfaces, giving an entirely new dimension to the game. The projected release date is now the end of January, so keep your peepers peeled. Z

Sail of the century

Will Empire's new strategy game appeal to more than just 17th Century naval warfare fans?

PUTTING TO SEA FROM TALONSOFT'S HARBOUR comes the real-time historical strategy game, *Age Of Sail*, from Empire Interactive.

The game, which Empire claim is historically accurate, has the player captaining a variety of ships around the high seas of the 17th Century. It looks very much like a Windows 95 game (a sort of cross between Word for Windows and *Pirates!)*, but TalonSoft emphasise that the game's extremely playable strategy element will appeal to more than just fans of 17th Century naval warfare. Empire will publish the *Age Of Sail* some time in January and more information can be found on their web page at **http://www.empire.co.uk.**Z



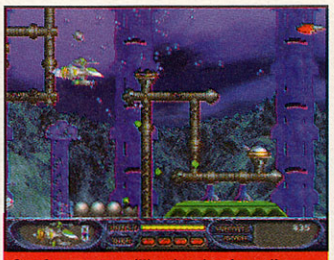
(Left) Wow, things are really hotting up down here. I can hardly follow the action it's soooo intense!



These *StarGunner* aliens will throw anything at you – even gigantic dildos!



It's been a while since we had a full-on side-scrolling shoot 'em up like this.



StarGunner: ten zillion levels of parallax scrolling – even underwater!

Apogee Go Flat-Hunting

The 2D-scrolling shoot 'em up is back with a vengeance and Apogee are leading the way with *StarGunner*.

RETURNING TO A WORLD OF PARALLAX, FLOATING upgrades and end-of-level guardians, Apogee are hoping to reawaken interest in the long-forgotten world of the side-on, 2D shoot 'em up. Remember *R-Type*? Of course you do...

StarGunner is said to be, "an explosion fest from start to finish", according to one independent source and contains all of the elements that made these games so playable in the past – constant movement, fast scrolling, wave upon wave of homicidal aliens and more bullets per screen than the average Tarantino retrospective.

StarGunner should be hitting the shops (courtesy of GT Interactive) any time now and we'll bring you a full review as soon as we can find a reviewer old enough. Z

The Great and the Good

Interactive Magic give you the chance to take over the world.





Ker-Plunk with huge, pointy spears – while away the hours in *Battles of Alexander*.

UNLIKE HIS NEAREST RIVALS, Alexander the Quite Good, Alexander the Fairly Average and Alexander the Frankly Not Up To It, Alexander the Great was one of the most feared and respected military minds ever. Now, thanks to some of the most feared and respected military programmers ever, Interactive Magic give you the chance to recreate his most famous battles in their latest wargame.

Battles Of Alexander The Great uses a comprehensive control system to let players fight their way across Greece, Africa, Asia and Newport Pagnell, with fully animated troops carrying out their every order. Wars can also be waged over the Internet and LANs, thanks to the multi-player options. *Battles* is due to be completed by March and more details can be had from http://www.imagicgames.co.uk. Z

Return of the Vikings

And the award for the longest sequel in the making goes to...

THOSE WACKY NORDIC WARRIORS ARE BACK AFTER A DELAY OF OVER three years. *The Lost Vikings II* sees a return of those loveable axe-wielding pillagers Erik the Swift, Baleog the Fierce and Olaf the Stout as they bounce through time on another platform-based adventure.

Retaining the playability of the first game, *The Lost Vikings II: Norse By Norsewest* contains 31 levels of high-quality presentation and two new characters to help you out – Fang the Werewolf and Scorch, a file-breathing dragon. Although quite how a large lizard that can spit ring-binders at people will help you is anyone's guess (*I think it's meant to be 'Fire-breathing'. There was a mistake in the press release – Ed.*) Ah. Fair enough then.

Anyway, the release date is in a few months and we'll bring you more details then. Z



Erik, Baleog and Olaf return, with help from a werewolf and a fire-breathing dragon.

Dispatches

WARPED BRAIN

Sequel to the highly underrated *Lost Mind of Dr Brain*, *The Time Warp of Dr Brain* is an amalgamation of fiendishly smart puzzles and simple point-and-click action for a wide range of ages. The wafer-thin plot wibbles on about 'Space Time Discontinuums' and how Dr Brain has zapped himself to a primordial age from which he must escape, which does little but insult our intelligence. "Battle the river flow and the Evil Otter at Beaver Dam, or challenge the Funky Monkey to a word-building race at the temple door." Man, I know it doesn't make sense, but these things never do. The puzzles themselves, though, should be brilliant if the original is anything to go by. So let's just wait and see.

Http://www.sierra.com – I dare ya!

JAMMY GET

Mega-star Michael Jordan, cartoon legend Bugs Bunny and a bunch of ugly aliens from the furthest reaches of space. It could only happen in *Space Jam*.



Bugs Bunny and co. team up with basketball superstar Michael Jordan in *Space Jam*.

This zany hoopfest, based on the Warner Bros. movie, features your favourite Looney Tunes characters as they team up with Jordan to rescue the planet from the Monstars, extraterrestrials who've stolen the basketball talents of some of the NBA's coolest players. Daffy dunks. Goofy hosts locker-room rivalry. Take on the Wascally Wabbit Obstacle Course. It's all in there. Coming soon from Acclaim. See **http://www.acclaimnation.com** for the full lowdown.

VSS FROM ATD

VSS: yet another acronym for us *to* marvel over from those wonderful people over at ATD (an interesting acronymic specimen in itself). *VSS*, or *Voxel Sprite System*, is a top new SAE (self-addressed envelope... sorry, Sprite Animation Engine) for the PC (Personal Computer) which uses a complex mixture of coloured dots to create 'solid' objects that can be viewed from any direction. An early downloadable demo can be found at **http://www.atd.co.uk**, but *VSS* will initially be shown off in *The Incredible Hulk: The Pathenon Saga* from EIDOS. *VSS* is the second 3D animation system of this kind, Cranberry Source's much talked about Polar Sprout engine being the first, announced some months ago. It will be interesting to see which works best. All this innovation, and NovaLogic haven't even had a look in!

GREMLINS IN THE SYSTEM

Did we say last month that we'd found a virus on a Gremlin disc that we used for our *Sand Warriors* preview? Oops, gremlins in our production department – apologies for any implications that could have been drawn from this. The writer concerned is now swinging from the rafters as we speak.

»

WIN! WIN! WIN!

A Bloody Huge Telly!

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WHAT A WAY TO START THE NEW YEAR! PC ZONE readers have an exclusive chance to win their very own monster TV, courtesy of Philips Media, publishers of *Down In The Dumps*.

All you have to do is answer the simple questions below, fill in your details and send it to the following address:

PC Zone/Down In The Dumps Competition
CPZ72A, Customer Interface,
1st Floor Suite,
Bradley Stoke Pavillions,
Bradley Stoke North,
Bristol BS12 0BQ.

All entries must reach us by January 31st 1997, and all usual restrictions apply.

TEN runners up will receive a copy of *Down In The Dumps*, the innovative new adventure game from Philips Media, so even if you don't win the telly, there's no need to be down in the dumps. (Ahem.)



I wanna win a huge telly!

Questions:

1. According to a recent report, which European nation bought and used the least quantity of soap per her head last year?
a) The English b) The French c) The Germans

2. Which country has been proclaimed the dumping ground of Europe for nuclear waste?
a) The United Kingdom b) France c) Spain

3. Which of the following phrases is the most accurate description of Chris's (Dep. Ed.'s) desk?
a) Absolutely spotless with nothing on it (but an ashtray – of course)
b) Full of neatly filed press releases and boxes of games
c) A right bloody dump and a danger to everyone's health

Name: .....

Address: .....

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Postcode: .....

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All entires to the above address by the end of January please!

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ACCOLADE

HOTSHOTS

The headlines tonight: new shots of LucasArts' *X-Wing Versus TIE Fighter*, Delphine's *Moto Racer* and Origin's *Ultima IX* hit these shores. The population go wild. Many people feared crushed in the rush to see them.

ULTIMA IX (EA/ORIGIN)

Believe it or not, Richard Garriot (founder of Origin software and Lord British to his friends) is building his very own castle. Yep, his very own folly – with proper turrets, a big fireplace and… whatever else they build in castles these days – probably loads of secret passages, rotating rooms, a huge banqueting hall and huge candelabra. Whether or not he decides to recreate his house in the stupendous polygonal world of the *Ultima* games is anyone's guess, but if he does you can bet it will look something like this.











X-WING VERSUS TIE FIGHTER (LUCASARTS)

Sorry, we can't resist it. These new *X-Wing Versus TIE Fighter* shots came in at the last minute and we just had to print them – just for you! 'Amazing' isn't the word for them. Neither is 'phenomenal'. In fact, how could you describe how spoogeworthy this game should be when we get hold of it in March?! We can hardly contain ourselves. Anyway, watch out for a huge preview next month in which we'll be looking at all the ships in detail and checking out the awesome new game engine. We'll also be taking a very early peek at *Jedi Knight* and *Rebellion*, the awesome sequel to *Dark Forces* and the new strategy combat sim due later this year.





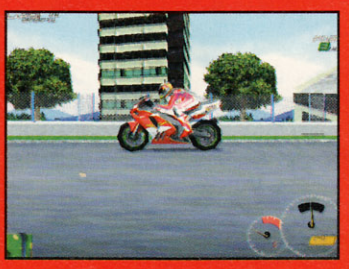




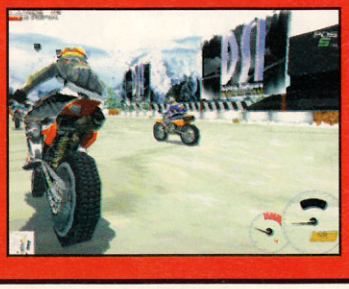
MOTO RACER (EA/DELPHINE)

Delphine – now there's a company with a rich and fabulous gaming heritage, despite the fact that they're French (xenophobia fans). Anyway, as reported last month, *Moto Racer* – a new multi-faceted bike racing game – is on schedule for a March release, courtesy of EA. We played an early version recently and thought it looked highly promising. Despite the amount of detailing on the bikes, riders and tracks the frame rate was quite acceptable and Delphine have promised not to compromise anything in terms of speed, detail and gameplay.













PC ZONE

our price

Welcome to *PC Zone*'s very own version of *The Chart Show*, sponsored by OurPrice. Each month it'll feature the titles that we think will be flying off the shelves in the coming weeks, and it will also play host to exclusive news and competitions.

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9. **SYNDICATE WARS** *(Electronic Arts)* ***£34.99***



10. **SWIV 3D (plus exclusive XS demo)** *(SCI)* ***£29.99***



Christmas has now come and gone, so what better way to while away those long winter evenings than sitting in front of your PC playing a fab new game. Stuck for ideas? Don't know what to buy? That OurPrice gift voucher burning a hole in your pocket? Just check out the countdown of the Top 10 selling PC CD-ROM titles and nip down to your local store sharpish. And don't forget, every month we give you a chance to win all of the OurPrice Top 10 games.

To take part in this month's Our Price Top 10 prize giveaway, put pen to paper and answer the question below. Good luck! Send your entries to the usual address.

OURPRICE QUESTION: Who developed *Command & Conquer: Red Alert?*

Rules & Restrictions: All entries must be received by 31st January 1997. No correspondence will be entered into – if you ring us up we'll subject you to vitriolic abuse before bunging you into the lions' cage at London Zoo. The Editor's decision is final and the winners will be notified by post. All other usual restrictions apply, so don't even think about it, okay?

WATCH THIS SPACE FOR MORE NEWS FROM OUR PRICE NEXT MONTH!

DISCLAIMER: The Top 10 printed is correct at the time of going to press but positions, titles and prices may vary throughout the month.

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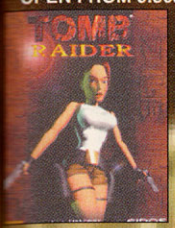
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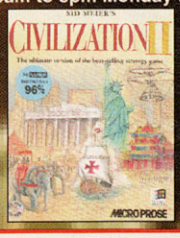
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At home with...

ODDWORLD INHABITANTS

Platform games are usually strictly passé on the PC, but newly formed US-based developers OddWorld Inhabitants have come up with an innovative new slant on the kiddy console genre. Jeremy Wells went to San Luis Obispo, California, courtesy of GT Interactive, to buy some new trainers, drink lots of light beer and sneer unimpressed at yet another bunch of film-makers turned gaming 'experts'. Dumb ass Limey!



(Left) All the graphics look absolutely stunning, but you'd expect this from a bunch of computer animation specialists, wouldn't ya?

YOU PROBABLY HAVEN'T HEARD OF ODDWORLD INHABITANTS, but you've probably experienced some of their work if, that is, you've ever been to EuroDisney, Universal Studios in Florida or seen 'The Last StarFighter', 'Blade Runner', '2001: A Space Odyssey' or more recently 'Babe'.

Formed in 1994 by special effects and computer animation veterans Sherry McKenna and Lorne Lanning, OddWorld Inhabitants is the brainchild of two like-minded people dedicated to producing a new kind of gaming experience that will appeal to a much wider audience than ever before. One's a die-hard gamer who still revels in the playability of such classics as *Asteroids* and *Defender* (Lorne), the other is a perfectionist in search of photo-realistic graphics and total immersion who, rather bizarrely, just happens to think that all games are crap (Sherry). So how did this unlikely pairing come together, and what the hell are they doing working on a series of games together?

"It's really down to a collective vision to create a new breed of interactive entertainment," maintains Sherry. Oh dear, says I, where have I heard that before? "Lorne and I met through working on high-end computer-generated special effects and graphics for movies. My background is in this area, as is Lorne's, and he basically convinced me that we could bring what we've learnt doing movies, sims, rides and stuff to produce a fantastic new game genre."

I know what you're thinking. You're thinking Rocket Science. So am I. I've written the words 'Doh' and 'Oops' in my notepad and my head has gone down in the same way a Man City fan's does after they're three-nil down, I decide to bite the bullet and show Lorne my note pad. Call it good ol' honesty. It's a British thing. It's probably a bad idea. He gives a wry smile. I put on my coat. He's a big bloke and I'm a stranger in a strange town somewhere in the back end of California. They probably have guns in their desk drawers. The poxy airline company have lost my luggage and I want a cup of real coffee with caffeine in it and I want my clothes back. I want to go home. Arsenal are playing the Scum on Sunday and I'm going to miss it. I've put my foot in it big time. Somebody get me outta here. Please...?

"I'm glad you think that," says Lorne, not looking in the least bit surprised. "Most people do when they hear our backgrounds. But it's not the case with OddWorld, let me explain..."

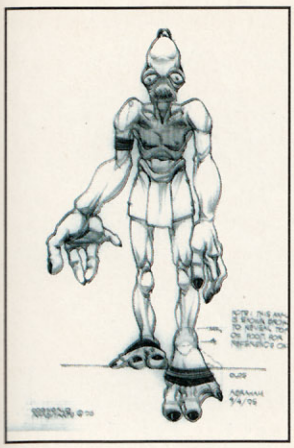
The story so far...

Before he can, Sherry chips in: "We're not that stupid. We know what we're doing. We're used to working against resistance and proving people wrong. When I worked on 'The Last Star Fighter', it was the first feature-length movie to use computer-generated special effects. It met with huge resistance from the film industry because they were used to working with models and all that stuff. Even then I just knew it was the way forward, and now look what's happened – we've got 'Jurassic Park', 'Babe' – almost every major movie release uses computers in some way - the whole thing's huge." I take my coat off.

"It was the same with the motion rides when we first worked on them. People just weren't sure what the technology could do. We spent two years making a motion film ride called 'Seafari' for a theme park in Japan. When people saw what we've created they were just blown away, but it was just a new way of doing things. It's all first-person POV [point of view], there's no cutting, if you



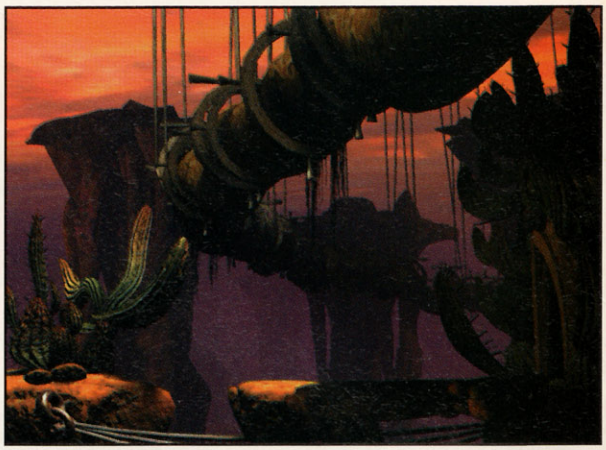
(Left) The main character, Abe, has been rendered at a ridiculously high resolution to make him future-proof.

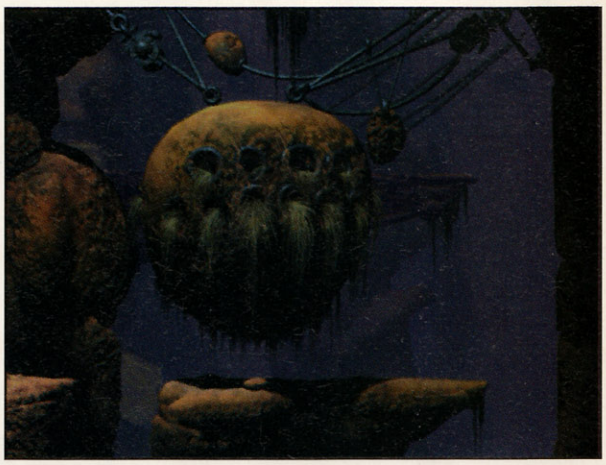




(Left & far left) The artists spent ages developing the characters and creating a realistic fantasy world for them to inhabit.

(Right) Just a couple of the hi-res backgrounds. The finished game will feature around 150 of them, all rendered at a ridiculously high resolution.





want to move the camera, you have to move the audience. A lot of that is applicable to games."

Lorne dims the lights and shows me the video. "You can't even begin to appreciate how much better the actual 'Seafari' ride in Japan is. You're not only thrown around in your seat by the motion-linked hydraulics, but it's all on 70MM film, so a lot of what you're seeing is just lost on video. You just lose so much detail. That's why it took us two years to complete. There's so much in there."

The lights come back on and Sherry picks up the thread: "People saw that film and just wanted to throw money at us. There was this big buzz about Siliwood at the time and we got made a lot of offers. Suddenly, big money people thought they could make a lot of money out of games. It was easy to get finance. A lot of people thought it would be easy to create games and cash in. We knew that it took more than a background in Hollywood to make a good game. We didn't want to use FMV because we felt it was too restrictive." Unlike some developers you could no doubt mention.

"People didn't take games seriously," adds Lorne. "To me it was obvious that games developers were performing miracles with very basic hardware and we should look to emulate that expertise. Just look at *Flashback* or *Prince Of Persia*. These were the first gaming movies because they offered a realistic player environment and real interactivity. People were saying that games like *Myst* were the way forward, and now with the PlayStation being so popular, everyone's going crazy about 3D. The imagery is creating the pull. But, hey – it looked neat, but I couldn't play *Myst* – I want to try and bridge that gap. Make it more alive and yet still have that same kind of twitch control. *Prince Of Persia* was funny and cinematic. People could watch you play and enjoy it, just like they can with *Mario 64*. Games should be fun, you should be able to have fun with characters in a game. And they shouldn't be aimed just at kids. I'm 31 years old and I like playing games. I grew up with games like *Asteroids* and *Defender*, I've always had an SNES and now I've got a PC and a PlayStation. I play games all the time. I want games to be aimed at my age group, not just kids. They should be funny, witty and amusing – that's the kind of game I want to create."





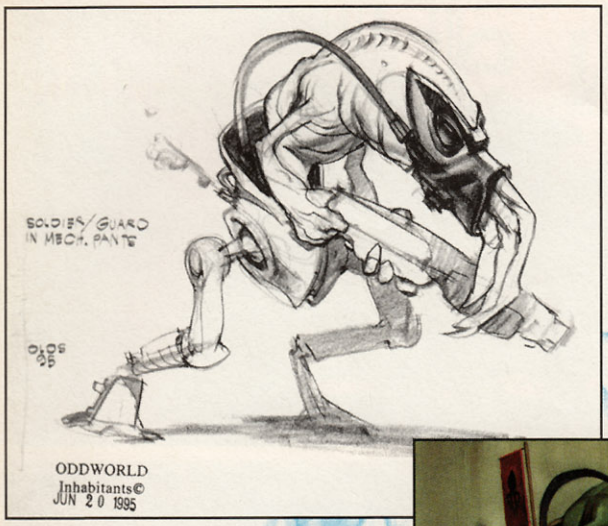
(Left & right) The game may be flick screen, but characters will move in and out of the screen on the Z axis to to give the impression of depth.

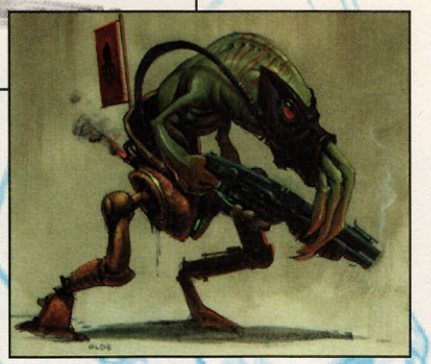
Abe's Oddysee... the first of many?

And so to *Abe's Oddysee*, the first of what will be a series of five games starring (among others) Abe, a kind of endearing Pepperami bloke with buck teeth and a weird line in funny chants. "We're very keen to create a character that is going to stand the test of time," remarks Lorne. "All the characters who appear in the first game have been rendered in 3D Studio at a very hi-res, much higher than is necessary. The reason behind this is that we want to build a data format that we can use at a later date. If we do everything really hi-res now, we won't have to re-do it when we start the next game. The same goes for the environments. We want consistency throughout the series, so we can build on the same universe. This time round, all the characters are pre-rendered. For the next game it'll be all real-time. We've given a lot of thought and time towards working it all out, making the gaming universe stand up. Hopefully, this will save time later."



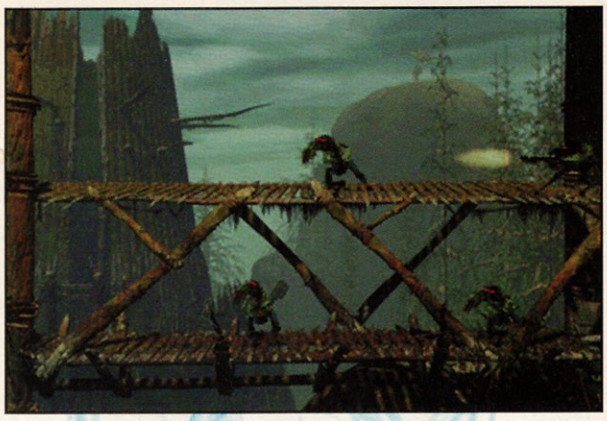






(Right) The player will be able to 'inhabit' other creatures and force them do the dirty work.

(Left & below) One of the exquisitely drawn Sligs.

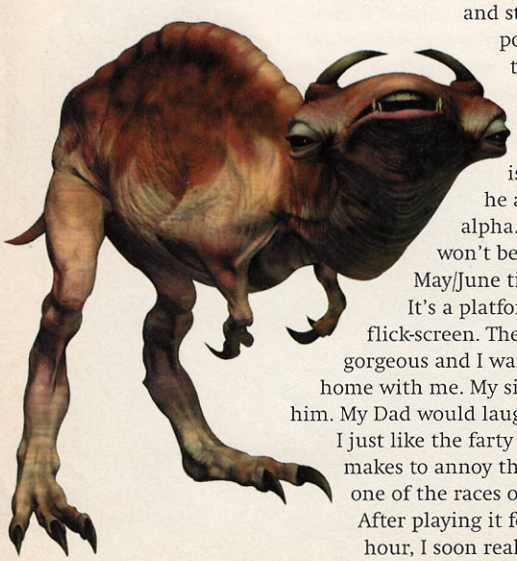


« It certainly looks awesome, and a quick shufty through the reams and reams of sketches, drawings and renderings of all the characters and scenarios is enough to confirm that the past 18 months creating the OddWorld universe haven't involved lounging in the California sun, sipping an ice cold (and under-strength) Bud. But what of the game?

"*Abe's Oddysee* is going to be about content," confirms Lorne. "There aren't any puzzles in the game as such, rather circumstances and situations that the player must work out. We're trying to dissolve the boundaries that normally put people off games. For instance, there are no status screens, score bars, time limits or game lives. Instead, if Abe is feeling weak, he'll move slower and his voice will change. Similarly, the music will try and dictate the pace when there's danger. It will all be suggestive rather than on the screen in a series of menus and pop-up windows. We don't want anything to detract from the interactivity. It will be completely immersive. Ultimately, we're aiming for the same kind of experience as the Holo-deck from 'Star Trek: The Next Generation', but it's gameplay first and then realism." Maybe in a couple of hundred years?

Play the game

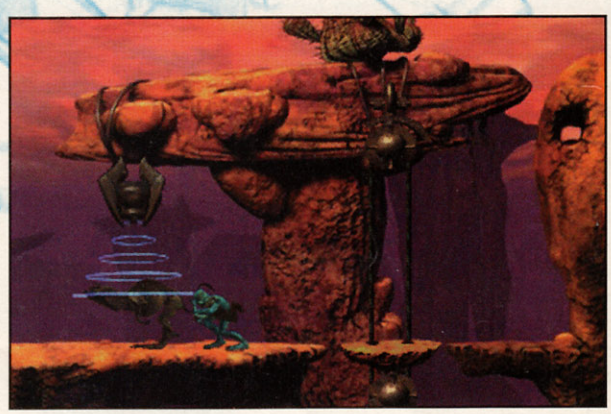
After this kind of build-up, I just wanna play the damn thing. Usually, at this point, you're led out of the building, taken for a very pleasant meal, plied with drink and then put on a plane home. Consequently, it's a nice surprise when Lorne loads up an early version of the game and starts to play it, pointing out all the gaps in the code as he goes. It looks smart. "This is very early," he admits, "Pre-alpha. The game won't be out until May/June time."



It's a platform game; it's flick-screen. The graphics are gorgeous and I want to take Abe home with me. My sister would love him. My Dad would laugh at his voice. I just like the farty noise he makes to annoy the Scrabs (just one of the races of baddies). After playing it for half an hour, I soon realise that it's not as simple as it first looked. First of all you have to master 'Gamespeak' – a simple but no doubt sophisticated feature that lets you communicate with other characters in the game via basic control combos. Then you've got to learn how to control Abe. He can walk, run, roll, crouch, leap, sneak, chant, throw objects and even possess other characters. Everything he does is beautifully animated and quite seamless, as are all the other characters (there are seven types in all).

Playing through just the first level (and it's still very incomplete) should be enough to convince anyone that there's going to be a lot to this game. You really have to think about what you're doing. There's a lot of baiting the other characters and tricking them into doing your dirty work (Abe's essentially a good-natured soul) – there's obviously a lot of AI going on somewhere. All the characters can hear as well as see (the game features intelligent sound) and if the player can't see Abe on screen, then neither can the other characters, so there's a lot of sneaking about, setting traps and acting the little bugger. Most importantly, it's fun to play and somehow at the same time very unassuming and yet clever.

Sherry and Lorne have set themselves very high standards, and their background in movies will no doubt prompt more scoffs and wry smiles than if they were a British developer working out of some shed in the Midlands. Hopefully, this will just make them even more determined to succeed. So far, the future's looking bright for Abe and his friends. **Z**





(Right & left) All the characters have their own sophisticated AI, which means they'll act independently within the gaming environment.

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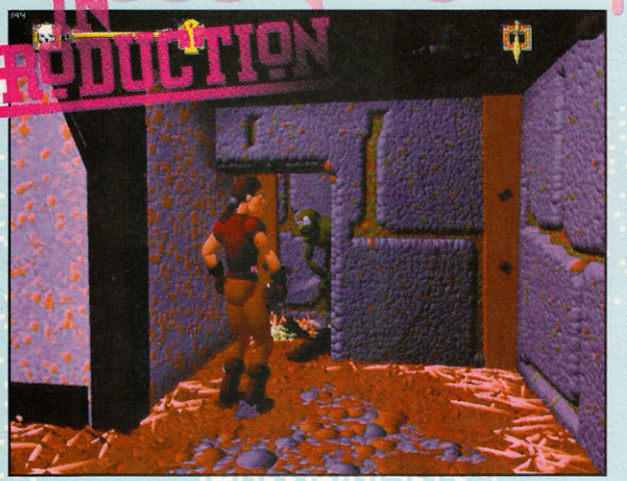
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Blue Byte

"Sally forth and inspect the faraway world of *Ecstatica II*," we bellowed down the phone at Charlie Brooker. "How do I get there from my house?" he stammered. "Catch the number 29 bus from Camden Road and get off just by Holloway Prison, then double back until you cross York Way, which leads to North Road," said the bloke from London Transport's information line. "That's the shortest route by far," he added inaccurately, failing to realise that this advice would add 40 minutes to a journey that could have been completed on foot in five. The twat.

Ecstatica II

IN PRODUCTION







DO PEOPLE STILL WORRY ABOUT THE size of their penises? I think I'm right in saying that the 'does size matter?' question seems to have been rearing its angry head less frequently in recent years. Whether it was ever truly resolved or not, I'm not entirely sure; the last word came from the women, and typically, they couldn't really make up their minds – although the 'nays' just about won.

Some said that what you *do* with it is more important (which is pretty obvious really – if you were boiling it in a saucepan or something, instead of guiding it into the desired location, then it ain't much use to anyone, even if it's the size – if not shape – of Canary Wharf). Others insisted that large ones hurt far too much to be enjoyable anyway (I have a similar theory regarding stools), whereas on the other hand the dissident voices of the 'big is beautiful' brigade maintained that as far as appendages go, the closer the resemblance to five quids' worth of beef saveloy, the better. Anyway, I'm lucky enough not to have to worry about the whole debate, because I've got a 'magic' one which actually *changes in size* from time to time. Incredible. It'd baffle medical science, I can tell you. *(Actually, I think the word is 'appal' – Ed.)*

Anyway, when it comes to the size of your *games*, size most definitely *does* matter. Take *Ecstatica*, for instance – remember that? It boasted brilliantly animated characters formed from eye-pleasingly curvy 'ellipsoids' as opposed to angular polygons, plenty of *Alone in the Dark*-style 3D shenanigans, a pungent and pervasive odour of brooding menace – all in all a superb game. Until you finished it, that is. Which, sadly, happened rather too quickly.

(Above) Hi, I've just moved in upstairs and wondered if you could spare me a cup of sugar?

(Above right) Stabby stab stab, stabby stabby stab-stab. Stab. Stab stab stab. Stab. Stab. Stab stab stab stab stabby stabby stab stab stab. Stab.

(Below right) The porter arrives to carry your bags to your room. Stab the bastard.

Product details

Developer: Andrew Spencer Studios
Publisher: Psygnosis
Telephone: 0151 282 3000
Format: CD-ROM
Release date: February 97

Toon army

Just like its forebear, *Ecstatica II* features some fantastic animation, for both the lead character and each of the multitudinous mooncalves (*You Roget's Thesaurus wanker, you – Ed.*) This is due to the efforts of Dave Lowry and Ken Doyle, a pair of highly talented animators (on this evidence, at any rate). Both hail from a traditional ink-and-paper animation background, something that *Ecstatica's* graphic editing tools have quite a bit in common with. Subtle changes to the actual shape of a limb here, the odd bit of stretch or squash there, and you're left with movements that look authentically fluid – and, most important of all, introduce genuine character into their subjects. We'd show you a picture of the editing screen in action, but they'd prefer to keep it secret. So secret in fact, that we'd have to hunt down and slay *every single reader* of this magazine if we accidentally printed one. Get down on your knees and pray that our Art Department hasn't mussed up, or your days are numbered.







(Left) Step right up, get yer vasectomies 'ere. Two for a pound, they're lovely. Now hold still sir. Left a bit... right a bit... um... Ngh! There! Another satisfied customer. Who's next? Roll up, roll up!

(Above) Our hero encounters Kate Moss in a puffer jacket.

(Below left) "Cuh! Judith Chalmers never mentioned the green, violent locals when she covered this place on 'Wish You Were Here'. The bitch."

Great big number two

Which is where our story really begins. For lurking away in deepest, darkest North London, the merry band of coders at Andrew Spencer Studios have been slaving away on *Ecstatica II* since January. It looks all set to contain the good bits of numero uno, and none of the bad. First things first: it's *bloody huge*. How huge? Well, let's look at it this way: if you were to sit down and play the initial *Ecstatica* game from beginning to end, knowing exactly what to do in each location and without making a single mistake, it would be just about possible to complete the whole thing within three-quarters of an hour. Try that with the sequel and you'll be at the computer for a full *50 hours*. Not only would you be tired, hungry and more than a little strung out, you'd probably be sitting in a pool of your own urine as well. It'd be like playing *Tramp Simulator*.

Furthermore, after that much time spent staring at a glaring monitor screen, your eyes would burst and run down your cheeks like so much egg yolk. Which would be a shame, because then you wouldn't be able to appreciate the lovely SVGA graphics that accompany the whole shebang. And your fingers would be suffering from such severe RSI that you'd have to snap them off and forget about them altogether, so you wouldn't be able to appreciate all the new character actions either. So don't do it.

The storyline picks up from where the original game left it dangling (er... assuming you played as the bloke and chose the 'good' ending, that is). It goes something like this...

Our 'ero (who's a Prince, innit?) has been and gone and fallen in love with Ecstatica, the bird he saved from that bastard demon geezer wot was lordin' it up in the village of Tirich. Fancies 'er rotten, 'e does. Anyway, they're making their way back to 'is castle, all set to get hitched and that, when 'e starts noticing that his manor's looking a bit dodgy and run down, like. So there they are, on horseback, just making their way through the castle gates when would you Adam and Eve it, a bunch of monsters pop up and give the pair of 'em a right old kickin'. Bang out of order. He wakes up a bit later – and he's only been bunged in the bleedin' stocks, innit! And as for that Ecstatica bird, well, Christ knows where the 'ell she's got to. It's a right old mystery and no mistake, that it is, guv'nor, knees up muvver Braahhn strike a light cor blimey.

That's how it opens – your task is to roll your sleeves up and sort it all out. Which isn't going to be easy.

Hey hey we're the monsters

Had the first *Ecstatica* game starred Shaggy from 'Scooby Doo', he'd probably have yelped his trademark cry of "zoiks!" about six or seven times each time he saw a new monster. Were he »



The world is a sick ball of darkness

Andrew Spencer and his cohorts are clearly an imaginative and industrious bunch, and once you visit their office it's clear that they exhibit several of the telltale signs of the truly artistic. For one thing, they seem to work in almost complete darkness. Judging by the size and content of their communal ashtray, most of them smoke fairly heavily. They start work around midday and keep at it until the early hours. Easy going, but with a tangible air of deep thought about them. And if the audio CDs scattered around the place are anything to go by, they've got good taste in electronic music, too. Bet they know a Camberwell Carrot when they see one.

Not quite as sick

Another thing that made *Ecstatica 1* so noteworthy was the nonchalantly callous nature of much of the content – bishops hanging from ceilings, helpless maidens skewered on swords, blind beggars being beaten to death and the like. It's been toned down a bit for the sequel (and most of the religious references of its predecessor are gone too – blame the barely-evolved scum populating the US Bible Belt), and as such should be available to a slightly wider audience. There's still some pretty sick stuff in there, though (a brief aside with a torture rack springs to mind). Wait for Andrew Spencer's next project, the long-anticipated *Urban Decay*, for the full quota of visceral nastiness (and plenty of swearing too).





(Above) What a beautiful night for a rooftop stabbing.

(Above right) Don't throw your Always Ultra at me, chum.

« to stumble his way into *Ecstatica II*, his throat would get so hoarse he'd end up gargling Oil of Ulay just to cool it down, because there are *shitloads* more petrifying beasties this time round. In fact, he'd probably have to shout "zoiks!" into a sampler and start hitting all the buttons at once, while shouting, in order to keep up.

Creature comforts

Yes, it's a like an Ethereal Creature Convention (or MonsterCon '97, if you prefer) at times in *Ecstatica II*. All manner of hairy backs and scaly palms, gnashing teeth and mis-shapen genitalia (probably), heading your way with a distinctly malevolent gait. If you've ever stood on a platform at Reading station and looked at passers-by, you'll find it unsettlingly familiar.

Most of your (un)favourites from the first game seem to be there (giant spiders, little piggy people, that *bastard* werewolf), but among the new arrivals you'll find skeletons, zombies, very ugly ogres, scary floating-eyeball things (called 'beholders'), vampires, goblins, and Eamonn Holmes*. There's even a point where you find yourself getting beaten senseless by a gang of Amazon Women (Russ Meyer eat your heart out).

There's another difference here too: in the original game you couldn't actually *kill* some of the rotten buggers; most famously in the case of the *bastard* werewolf who seemed to shadow your every footstep from the moment you entered the village, dishing out a series of merciless beatings with an ego-shattering regularity.

Well, that's all changed. Now, you can kill everything that tries to kill you – but since they're randomly generated, you won't ever get the chance to fully relax. Navigating a sprawling and hostile environment, being relentlessly assaulted from all sides by gross aberrations of nature – it's a bit like a tour of South London after midnight, really. Only much more *fun*.

*Not really, although that would be scary.





(Below) As his last victim lies screaming in a bubbling pool of his own viscera, our hero suddenly remembers that he left the oven on.



Eggs da tick r2

At the time of writing, *Ecstatica II* is due for release sometime within the next two months. We're itching to get our hands on it. We're squatting on our hind legs, panting and making doe eyes at people, expectantly awaiting our review copy of the game. It won't be long now. Once we've got it, we'll play it to death and let you know what it's like, okay? And from what I've seen so far, I'm prepared to bet we'll be using lots of exclamation marks and saying nice things. Keep 'em peeled. Z



Big John, Little John

While writing the spurious opening paragraph for this article, something occurred to me: a few slang terms for the male member imply impressive length and girth, while others don't. And the 'smalls' outnumber the 'bigs' by an alarming degree. Here's a handy at-a-glance guide to illustrate my point.

SMALL	BIG
Willy	Donger
Nob	Shlong
Pecker	Cock
Prick	
Dick	
Weiner	

So, if you can think of any *new* slang terms, which imply that the object under discussion is fearsome and mighty to behold, jot them on a postcard and post it to the following address: *Points Of View, BBC Television Centre Wood Lane, London W12 8QT.*

First one out of the bag wins a forest of caviar trees or something. I don't know. Whatever.



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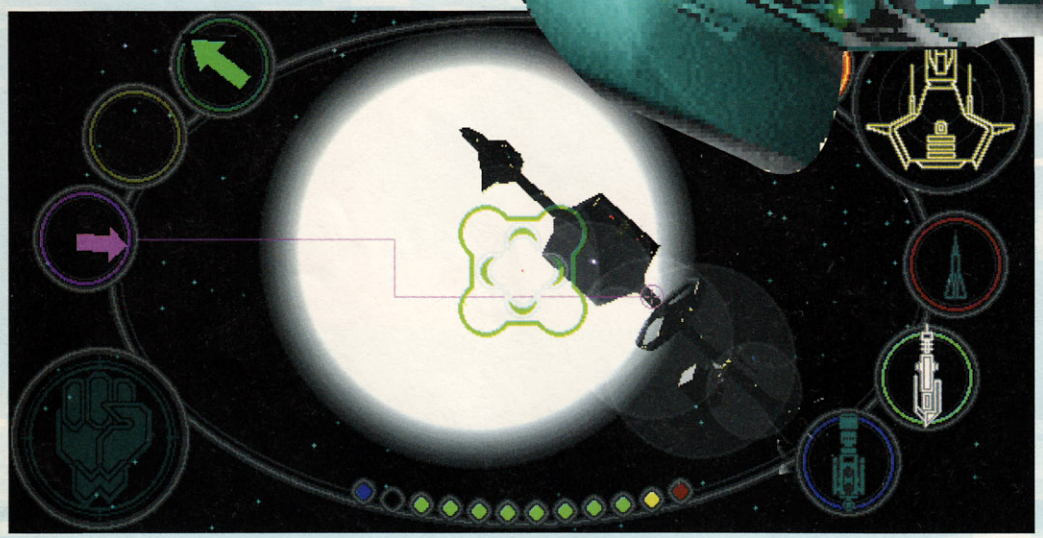
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Darklight Conflict

IN PRODUCTION

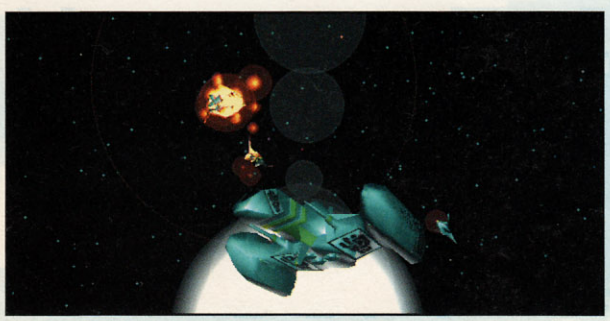
When Jeremy Wells went all the way up to Liverpool to see Rage's new space combat sim he very nearly came straight back home again in a huff after what he saw through the window. Shame he wasn't bright enough to find the front door.





(Above) All the in-game graphics are extremely detailed and exquisitely light-sourced.

(Below and right) Impressive as they are, cut-scenes have been kept to a minimum.



AFTER BANGING ON THE DOOR of what looks like a deserted building in the heart of the Liverpool docklands for a good 20 minutes, and then trying (in vain) to hoist myself up via the bars on the windows to at least see if I was at the right address (half empty pots of paint and a jamboree of junk that resembled Chris's desk here at *Zone* was a pretty good indication that I was), I was about ready to grab my bag and start the long journey home. Luckily, a friendly Scouser stuck his head around the corner and beckoned me to follow him.

"Sorry about the bars and the window, like," he said. "We don't like to advertise the fact we've got thousands of pounds' worth of hardware inside. And this is the back entrance – why didn't you come around the front?"

I looked sheepishly at the pavement as he led me through the fenced-off car park and into the Rage offices before introducing himself as John, Product Manager for *Darklight Conflict*, and shoving a hot cup of coffee into my hand. Jesus! It was at this point that I realised that it was bloody freezing outside – it was a sunny day back in London when I left.

Before I had time to burn my tongue on my life-restoring beverage, and my hands had a chance to feel like they were actually attached to the rest of my body, I was plonked down in a comfy chair and given the low-down on *Darklight Conflict* by the programming team.

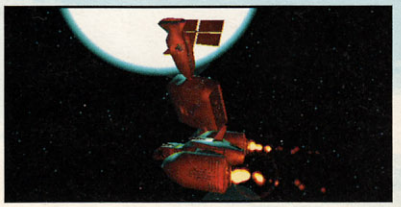
The game is set in the future (1999 to be exact) and the US Navy are busy fighting drug barons off the coast of Mexico. As luck would have it (or, perhaps, wouldn't), two alien races, namely the Reptons and the Ovons, have decided to interfere in the proceedings. The player, being an absolute whiz at aerial combat and an all-round 'ace' type bloke, has been recruited by the seemingly friendly Reptons (anyone remember that BBC micro game *Repton* by the way?) to fight the Ovons (who have teamed up with the drug barons) on Earth's behalf. Suffice to say, without giving too much away here, *Darklight Conflict* is a space combat game featuring a rather juicy plot that follows the player's struggle against the evil Ovons.

Another space shoot 'em up?

Well, er... yes, and no. You see, you do have to shoot at an awful lot of Ovons (and Reptons later on, for that matter) to proceed through the game, but *Darklight* also contains asteroid fields to navigate and mine, which brings a resource management feature (which is admittedly on the basic side) as well as a strong strategic element into the proceedings. In other words, you'll need more than an itchy trigger finger to get through the game.









Product details

Developer: Rage

Publisher: Electronic Arts

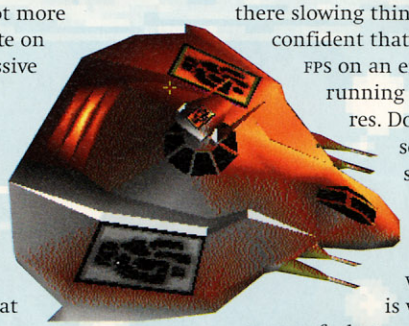
Telephone: 01753 549442

e-mail: www.ea.com

Format: CD-ROM

Release date: March '97

As I spout off about the merits of *X-Wing*, *TIE Fighter*, *Descent* and *Inferno*, I'm presented with some early, albeit mightily impressive code. "We've looked at all those games," chips in programmer Colin, "and we've tried to include all the best elements but make it look a lot better. As well as concentrating on gameplay we've tried to make the visuals a lot more detailed and concentrate on producing some impressive real-time visuals."



A quick glimpse at what's on the screen is enough to confirm that they've achieved at least half of what they've set out to do. Colin explains how: "Unlike other games that try and cram as many texture-maps onto the screen as possible, we've gone down the opposite road and used some pretty complex geometry and light-sourcing to give the objects a realistic look. Basically, our engine allows us to construct objects made up of thousands of polygons and use effects such as lens flare and specular deflection to give the impression of a much more detailed player environment. At the same time we want *Darklight* to be as accessible as, say, *TIE Fighter* or *X-Wing* in that the player doesn't have to wade through a wedgy manual beforehand. We want them to be able to get into the action with the minimum of fuss."

Before I can ask what 'specular deflection' is, John continues... "The engine you're seeing here is essentially a re-written version of the one used in *Pyrotechnica*. We realised that we had a very powerful tool on our hands, and that the player would probably appreciate the result. With *Darklight* we wanted the player to see all the real-time lighting effects and feel the motion effect."

"Too right," adds Colin. "Our engine was so realistic it made people want to spew and we wanted to build on that level of realism."

Here any self-respecting games journo enquires what the expected frame rate will be. Not being one to go against the flow, this question leapt from my lips.

"On a P75 with 8MB of RAM we're talking around 15 to 24 FPS," confirms Colin. "We haven't started to optimise the code yet; we're still at a very early stage and all the de-bugging stuff is in there slowing things down, but we're confident that it'll hit around 20 FPS on an entry-level Pentium running Windows 95 in hi-res. Don't forget that some of our models, such as the mother-ships, are made up of over 5,000 polygons, so what you're seeing is very detailed in terms of what you've seen before in other games of this type. Rest assured you won't experience too much slow down – we've found ways of keeping it smooth, even with up to 20 ships on-screen at the same time."

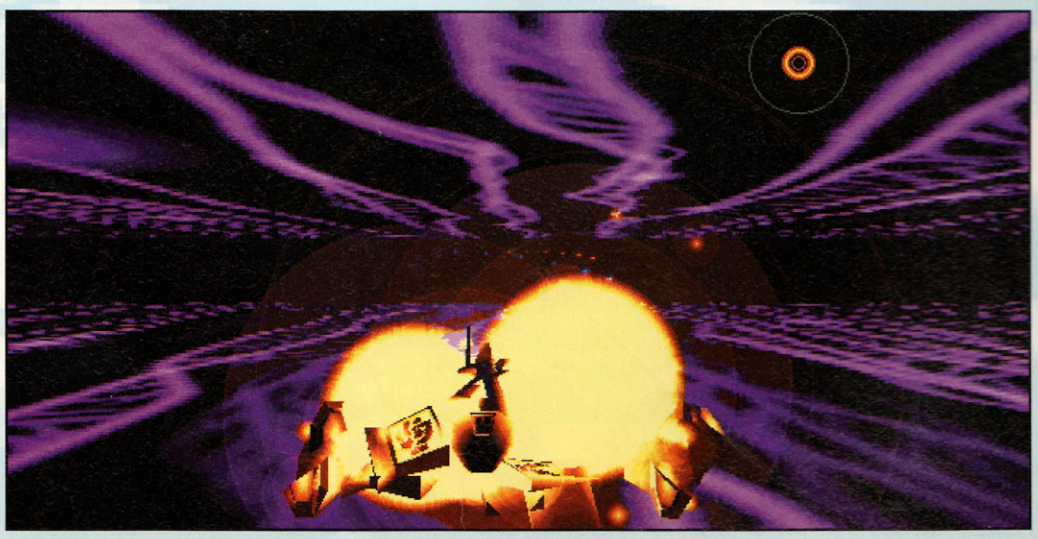
A quick sesh at the controls bears this out. The game zips along at a fair rate on the in-house P120 and although I struggle with the control system at first, I soon navigate my way through the impressively animated hyper-space gates (which include a neat power-up feature). I even notch up a few kills before dying thanks to a kamikaze Ovon. "We're still working on the AI," John stresses. "It's the hardest bit. At the moment we're finalising the 15 different weapons, finishing off the five-player ships and going through the structure of the missions. We've come up with a very helpful tool that we've christened Mission Description Language, which basically allows the level designers to implement changes very quickly. Although the game is essentially linear we've tried to make the missions as varied as possible: some will involve mining ore from asteroids, others escorting a convoy of Repton ships or bombing an Ovon mothership. Ultimately, we want to make the gameplay as varied as we can and allow the player to go head-to-head over a network or modem and blast the hell out of other players. So far we're pretty pleased with what we've got."

I'm pretty impressed so far, though whether it'll give the forthcoming *X-Wing Vs TIE Fighter* from LucasArts and Gremlin's *Sand Warriors* and *HardWar* a run for their money remains to be seen. Guess we'll find out in March. Z

(Above) Thanks to 'clever tricks', you won't experience much slow-down even when there's loads going on on-screen.

(Below and right) Dynamic light-sourcing helps make the space look less flat.





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Karen Kingsley's Nefarious Doings? Kevin Knight Nobs Dalmatians? We have no idea what it stands for – just as we have no idea what Patrick McCarthy stands for either.

IN PRODUCTION







(Right) And you thought traffic jams onto the Clifton Suspension Bridge were a thing of the past…

(Far right below) Looks like the Chrysler Building to me, ferkinell – is that all that's left of Manhattan? Neat.

IT'S THE FUTURE, JUST LIKE IT WILL BE by the time you read this. Only... er, more so. Things looked pretty darned good for a time, what with the near-eradication of nuclear weapons, the use of nanotechnology to sort out environmental problems, and the death of the entire cast of 'Chef'. But the peace and beauty couldn't last, or we wouldn't have a computer game on our hands. (Or if we did, it would be *Myst*. And it isn't. So it couldn't.)

Inevitably...

Suddenly, for no apparent reason I can discern from the press release, waves of nuclear warheads tumbled down from the heavens, turning the planet into a very big two-bar fire – only with radiation and stuff. These were closely followed by "mutagenic" viruses which eat humans and animals, and nano-weapons which eat computer circuitry, electric cables and plastics. Infrastructure collapsed; billions were killed; billions more starved. One or two got very peculiar haircuts. Just a handful of the very rich escaped by taking to their underground shelters with their vast supplies of baked beans and burger bites, and a torch.

Cheer up

On the positive side, you won a fiver on an Instant Lottery card.

Overground

But life was tough for anyone left on the surface. Hideous, mutant killer insects. Hideous, mutant killer plants. Hideous, mutant killer people. Only the strong survived, evolving into something... less than human (music).

Underground

Beneath the surface, things were »

(Below) Yeah, and that could be Wembley Stadium, top left. The ticket touts are real hard in the future – or are they 'Big Issue' sellers?



The Questionnaire: A Survivor

Archibald Survivor has lived in the subterranean shelters for 26 years. His hobbies include back-combing his hair, lying around in a spangly robe, and trying to see where he's going.

What's your idea of perfect happiness?
A large herd of Mutes and a missile launcher.

What is your greatest fear?
Losing the tin-opener.

What's your most embarrassing moment?
I was reversing my armoured car over the heads of a family of Mutes, and when I looked in the rear-view mirror, my hair was all over the place.

What makes you depressed?
Natural fibres. And only being able to see my tads with the aid of a mirror.

What is your favourite word or phrase?
Pre-chewed meal.

What words or ph ses do you most overuse?
"Who said that?" and "Ouch. My head."

What two items ... always carry with you?
A li-lo and some [illegible] you never know when the specie[s] might need a boost.

What would yo... ...e?
A penny saved was a bit of a waste of time in the circumstances.

How would you like to die?
Peacefully, in my sleep, after shagging my sister's best friend.





(Left) Scorpions, running amok? And they've been feeding on baked beans? Talk about stings in their tales. Poo-ee!

(Below) Singing, 'Mutes are cute but Survs are pervs' – yup, it's a local Mutes vs Survs derby. Nightmare city.

« looking brighter. Not literally, of course. As much canned food as you could eat, and... well, that's it, actually. So not that much brighter, then. Especially as the baked beans and burger bites proved more popular than anticipated, and are in danger of running out before you can say, "Generations of enforced incest are undermining the health and intelligence of the race, but improving our banjo-playing skills no end."

Conquering free

With the imminent disappearance of the last of their supplies in mind, the people from underground decide to head for the surface for grub. 'The Survivors,' as they liked to call themselves (or 'The Privileged In-bred Twats', as everyone else calls them) hit the surface, and the decendants of those who were too poor to get into the shelters start to hit them. And we have another *Command & Conquer*-type of game on our hands.

You can take the side of the underground-based upper classes, with their fancy weaponry, high-speed vehicles, powerful front paws *(Eh? – Ed.)* and incest-induced banjo skills. Or that of the overground-based underclasses, with their primitive weapons, highly-trained giant insects, hairy backs and predilection for raw meat.

Whichever side you opt for, there will be 15 single-player missions for you to embark upon (making 30 altogether). There will also be multi-player options galore, including network support for up to six players and modem support for two-player games. You'll fight it out among the post-apocalyptic ruins of once-great cities (think Birmingham), managing resources and training units. You may even discover hidden deadly technology from long-dead civilisations (tapes of 'The Thin Blue Line', for example). There'll be an ongoing plot, which will unfold as you play. And the whole thing will be set to a hard-core industrial soundtrack, so you can beat your head against the wall as you play. We'll have a full review next month. Z

Would you survive a nuclear attack?

That's right, we asked would *you* survive a nuclear attack? You don't know, do you? Well, we do. If you fall into one of the following categories, you're in with a chance. Just run your stubby finger dumbly down the list below like that moron from the Dixon's advert to find out. If you're not on the list, you're going to die hideously.

- Scorpion (the big poisonous tortoise-like animal, not the tank) *(You're a bit sketchy on scorpions, aren't you? – Ed.)*
- Short American actor with large biceps and a tin opener
- Cockroach and/or member of Royal Family
- Can-do guy, prepared to plunder, kill, mutate into a hideous beast and eat human flesh to survive
- Noel Edmonds

Product details

Developer: Beam

Publisher: Electronic Arts

Telephone: 01753 549 442

Format: CD-ROM

Release date: February





The Questionnaire: A Mute

Arthur Mute has lived alone, above ground in the post-nuclear wilderness for 25 years, after eating his parents at the age of three. His hobbies include working out, bludgeoning, chewing and swallowing.

What's your idea of perfect happiness?
A quiet night in and a good meal with my wife and children… as the main course.

What is your greatest fear?
Choking to death on a thigh-bone.

What's your most embarrassing moment?
I was beating a Survivor to a pulp with the shoulder-blade of a cow, and when I looked down my flies were undone. I laughed later.

What makes you depressed?
Having nothing to pick from between my teeth.

What is your favourite word or phrase?
Mastication.

What words or phrases do you most overuse?
Pass the giblets, Marlon.

What two items do you always carry with you?
My personal organiser and the head of my last victim.

What would your motto be?
Never bother chewing what you can swallow in one.

How would you like to die?
What? Want some, do ya? Come on then – [tape ends amid horrible thwocking noises]

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Wargods

Patrick McCarthy has the body of a god. The slug god, that is.



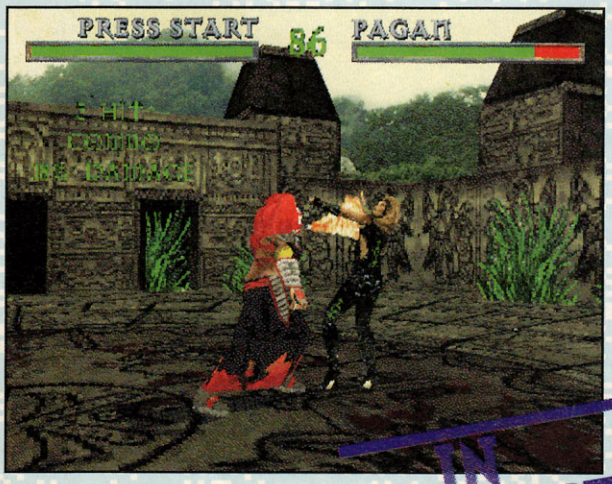
(Right) Halitotis, god of extremely bad breath, gives Pagan a good tonguing...

(Below left) Pagan then retaliates with a Listomint power-up...

(Below right) ...for which Halitosis performs a special Thanksabunch trance dance.

I'VE JUST HAD AN IDEA FOR TWO NEW TV shows. One's called 'Ready, Steady, Cock'. Two male celebrities walk on stage, and at the behest of Fern Britten, take out their penises. Two people from the audience will then, using only appliances, materials and foodstuffs found in the average kitchen, have half an hour to make as good a facsimile of the celebrities' appendages as possible. The audience will be allowed to bring a few basic foodstuffs with them, of course – but no sausages.

The second one's called 'Seeing Stars On Sunday'. This one is for anyone with an interest in all-in wrestling or praying. Two devoutly religious people will go mano-a-mano each week, over five rounds, dressed in the costumes of their god: long white beards, smocks with thunderbolt piping, whatever. (Zoroastrians can come as they are.) Two pin-falls or a submission; no biting, gouging, extra arms, use of sharpened religious artefacts or crucifixion. At the end of a round robin tournament, we'd finally know who the one true god is.



Anyway...

Which leads us into *Wargods* (well, sort of), the latest PC conversion of the classic arcade beat 'em up from Midway. The idea's very simple, and similar to the aforementioned TV show, except that instead of devotees of the various gods fighting, it's the gods themselves. Which is a bit of an odd idea, when you think about it. Why would gods bother fighting? Surely they'd sit around turning each other into Kentucky Fried Chicken portions, or Camilla Parker-Bowles' tampons, or whatever, just by thinking about it, rather than waste time jumping about in tights, slapping and kicking like mere humans?



Slip me some skin

Anyway, look around the page and you'll see them all, ready to have at it. You may not recognise your favourites, but that's modern times for you. They come in the usual range of beat 'em up sizes and colours, with overly-muscled freaky men types and the usual token overly-bosomed freaky women types. But here the characters look more realistic than anything we've yet seen in a beat 'em up on the PC, thanks to a new "digital skin technology". Instead of polygonal figures who look like an artful arrangement of Cornflakes packets and toilet-roll tubes, we have proper-looking people with proper-looking skin, complete with unsightly shaving rashes and huge hairy legs. And the men are even worse...

Like a circle in a spiral...

All the grunting and unpleasantness takes place in a true 3D environment, with photo-realistic background graphics. There are loads (and loads) of moves, combos and special moves to learn, perform and forget at crucial moments. Most of the characters have



Product details

Developer: Midway/Eurocom
Publisher: GT Interactive
Telephone: 0171 258 3791
Format: CD-ROM
Release date: February

IN PRODUCTION



some really nasty cutting and/or bludgeoning weapons, which they seem to keep stuffed down their tights until they need them, as they're nowhere to be seen at the start. And, thanks to the provision of a 3D button, there are special '3D moves', which allow you to leap about the arena like The Young Generation with power cables clipped onto their anal hair.

All this graphical splendour means you're about as likely to be able to play it on a 486 as you are of having a three-in-a-bed romp with the Queen Mother and Barbara Cartland. And even if you did, it would be about as enjoyable. We're talking Pentium-and-up-territory, here. We're also talking serious numbers of controller buttons. So it's lucky you memorised our gamepad round-up last month, isn't it?... Z

(Above) Warhead, the, er, god of war, goes head to head with Maximus, god of Sister Publications.



(Left) What happens when G-string Vallah and Cy-5 cross implements? Cystitis, of course. Ouch.

(Below) Maximus whips out his glowing Sister Publication, but it's not enough to stop thrusting Anubis from scoring a couple of points.



Ye Gods

WARHEAD

In the good old days of classical education, the god of war would have been called Mars, or Kit-Kat, or something. Warhead fires nuclear missiles from under his armpits. Not the recommended way to combat 'problem sweat' – and hardly the accepted approach to unarmed combat, either.

PAGAN



The goddess of people who like to keep their bottom area exceptionally clean, Pagan wears a minute G-string without fear of sullying it. She's also the goddess of teenagers who like to masturbate to computer games, and the patron saint of women who don't know when to stop with the Ladyshave.

KABUKI JO

Kabuki Jo, ex-Samurai warrior, ex-used slipper salesman, is now the god of Charlie Cairoli impersonators and face paint manufacturers. He's entirely responsible for all those little bastards who run about dressed as tigers, getting paint on your best trousers at parties.

VALLAH



The goddess of portly women who like to lie around in their underwear eating chocolate and crisps, Vallah has thighs the size of Germany. She also has a gigantic sword, which she whips out now and then to trim her nasal hair. And nobody knows where she keeps it.

MAXIMUS

The god of people who shop in High & Mighty and are really good at darts, Maximus is also blessed with a really shiny helmet and a gorgeous special weapon.

ANUBIS

Anubis is an ex-pharmacist turned god of people who suffer from chronic haemorrhoids and treat them with biscuits. Either that or he's an ex-Egyptian grave robber who was transformed into a god by coming into contact with a semi-mystical orb. Which d'you think sounds more likely?

TAK

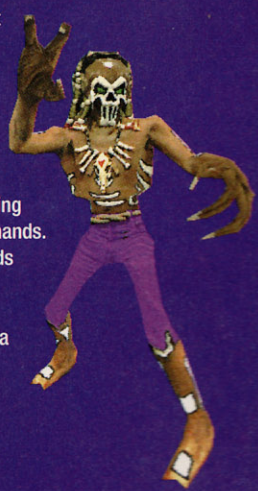


The god of people who fit carpets as a hobby rather than as a living (otherwise he'd be called Tape Really Badly), Tak is an ex-primitive idol made entirely of stone, his joints held together by old bits of chewing gum left by tourists. Unfortunately, he has no genitals.

CY-5

Cy-5 is the god of vacuum cleaners made flesh. He whirrs and clanks so much when he moves you'd think that he was the god of hip-replacement patients. In moments of danger, he belabours foes with a food processor.

VOODOO



Voodoo is quite good at fighting despite being the god of people who like to run around wearing joke rubber hands. His own hands became hideously distended in a washing-up accident. His nails are by Max Factor's Industrial department.

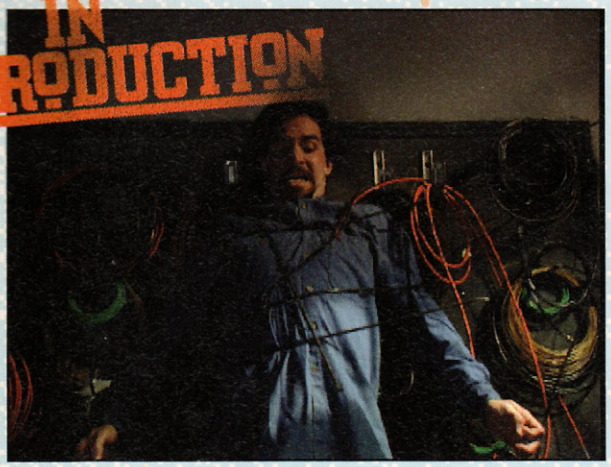
AHAU KIN

Ahau Kin is the god of people who have really bad colds. He used to be the god of people who like to walk around in skirts wearing big furry hats, but nobody ever turned up, so he changed his mind.

Phantasmagoria 2: Puzzle of Flesh

The puzzle of flesh, as far as Patrick McCarthy's concerned, is that it floats, but people still drown.

IN PRODUCTION



Product details

Developer: Sierra
Publisher: Sierra
Telephone: 0118 920 9100
Format: CD-ROM
Release date: Early 1997

THE FIRST *PHANTASMAGORIA* HAD people re-lining their underwear and it sold by the supertanker-load in the States, but did nothing over here. The consensus was that this was because it was a totally FMV-based 'adventure' which had very little of the traditional adventure's gameplay elements: all you mostly did was click to the next scene. The fact that many of the scenes were more blood-spattered than a Madame DuFarge hand-knitted balaclava (*was she the oiseau who knitted while the guillotine did its biz? – Ed.*), and that the lead character was a Mira Sorvino lookalike was enough for Americans; British adventure fans wanted more. (Apart from our Jeremy, who just wanted the Mira Sorvino lookalike.)





(Above) This guy's name is Hugh Grant, we kid you not, and just out of shot is Hannibal Lecter. Favva beans and a little Chianti anyone?

(Above right centre) Chain male, obviously.

(Above far right) We *told* you to use the hypoallergenic make-up, dummy!

(Below) So, you went for the Less Intense option, eh? Fool…

(Below right) Aaaaaaaaaaaaaaaagh! Crack. And *he* went for the Lens Intense option (*saw that one coming – Ed.*)



Promising news

Obviously, some of the criticisms of the original made it back to the game's developers, because the sequel seems to have had a bit of a re-think on the gameplay front. The puzzles aren't of the Edward de Bono-meets-The Marquis de Sade school, but they're puzzles nonetheless. This is promising news.

Unfortunately for monitor-oglers, the central character this time is a Kevin Costner lookalike. You play the unfortunate chap, one Curtis Craig. A year before the story starts you were in a psychiatric institution, having the National Grid re-directed through your frontal lobes. Now you're a technical writer in a dodgy chemical development corporation who specialise in treatments that have worse side effects than the illnesses they're supposed to relieve.

Naughty promises

You're involved with Jocelyn Rowan, the kind of girlfriend who likes to tell you she loves you in an open-plan office; you have a rival for promotion who hates you and you're the sexual target of a horny vixen who sends you dirty postcards. The last thing you really need is to start seeing visions of people hanging from the ceiling of your bedroom, hearing satanic voices over the phone, and receiving inexplicable violent blows to the back of your head. So that's what you get.



From what we've seen so far, it's nicely scary in tone (admittedly the music helps: 'The Magic Roundabout' would seem packed with tension if someone leant on the bass notes of a keyboard every 20 seconds). Apparently, it's even more gory than the last version, but it's not certain how much of the gorier stuff will be in the British release. The American version comes with a Less Intense option and a password facility to keep out prying little eyes, so hopefully the British version will be the same, rather than imposing draconian censorship. We'll know when we get it, and *you'll* know soon after that. Z

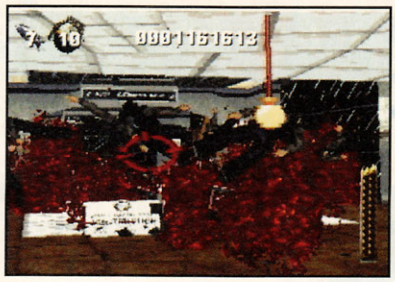
Things Americans like that we don't

There are many things that Americans are extremely keen on and which we British don't really care for. Here's a handy guide to just a few:

- *Phantasmagoriaboriasnoria*, and other 'games' that don't have much in the way of a game.
- Asking people to have a nice day when you don't care whether they live or die.
- Sports designed to be stopped every 12 seconds to accommodate TV advertisements.
- Sitcoms that have an easily-digestible moral platitude every week.
- Whooping in a high-pitched, girly way at sporting events.
- Bullying small Central American countries.
- Losing wars to small Asian countries.


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Only two people on the planet have never seen a single minute's footage of the 'Die Hard' films. One's a hermit who lives on top of a 50-foot pole in southern India. The other is Patrick McCarthy. Naturally, we gave *Die Hard Trilogy* to him.

Die Hard Trilogy



Oh, '*Die* Hard' – I thought they said 'Dye Hard' which is why I kept my vest dirty. Mind you, Demi swore blind it was some German porn film by Wim Wenders and the title was 'Die Härder', which as you know is the plural of... (*that's enough of that – Ed.*)

DIE HARD TRILOGY IS THREE GAMES in one, each based around one of the three 'Die Hard' films. It's been out on the PlayStation for a while, where its variety of gameplaying styles, its top-notch graphics and its unalloyed violence made it more popular than the man who remembered the apron at the nudists' deep-fat bacon-frying championship. Now it's coming to the PC.

Die Hard

The first part is a third person-viewed 3D shoot 'em up. You control Brucie, of course, as no-nonsense New York cop, Detective John McClane, whose catchphrase, "Yes, I had a bath this morning", made him so popular on 'Crackerjack'. It more or less follows the plot of the film. Alan Rickman (the Sheriff of Nottingham who died but kept bothering Juliet Stephenson when she was busy trying to truly, madly, deeply shag a bloke whose son has a talking toy dinosaur) has seized control of a very large building. He plans to steal millions of dollars from the building's security vault and use this to go back to Sherwood and fund his plan to kill Kevin Costner by means of a magic bullet conspiracy (*surely magic arrow? – Ed.*). And who can blame him.



But Bruce doesn't like it, so off you go, shooting terrorists and rescuing hostages until enough are saved on each level to activate a bomb, which you have to de-activate. There are shoot 'em up traditions like bonus levels and power-ups including assault rifles and machine guns, and more than 20 levels in which to wreak havoc.

Die Harder

The second part sees Bruce off to the airport to meet his wife's plane, only to find that another bunch of terrorists have decided to spoil his week. This time they're trying to free a notorious South American drugs baron. There's a different approach this time, presenting you with a first-person viewed, blast the shit out of everything 'em up along the lines of *Virtua Cop*, except that you can

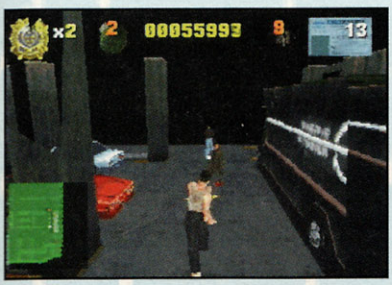


The background to the game

The game is based on the plots of a trio of little-known arthouse films dealing with the exploits of a turn-of-the-century Welsh shepherd. The first film, 'Dai Hard', has him attempting to punch his way to the top in the brutal world of bare-knuckle fist-fighting. Among the many disturbing scenes is the one in which the literal-minded hero attempts to lay his knuckles bare with a cheese grater and a jar of quicklime.

The second film in the series, 'Dai Herder', sees him abandoning the fight game in favour of making a living as a shepherd. Corruption in the business sours his attitude, however, and he attempts to forge a reputation as a professional sheep worrier. Eschewing the traditional method of hanging about the field in which they live muttering phrases from cookbooks, he launches an elaborate hate-mail campaign in which he questions the validity of all quadrapeds' existence. The scenes in which he teaches the unsuspecting sheep to read in preparation for the psychological torture to come are among the funniest in contemporary cinema.

Very few people have seen the third film, 'Dai Herds With A. Van Janss', in which he moves to the Netherlands, because the scene in Amsterdam's red light district with two Merinos, some electric clippers and a packet of mint-flavoured condoms led to the film being banned in most EC countries.





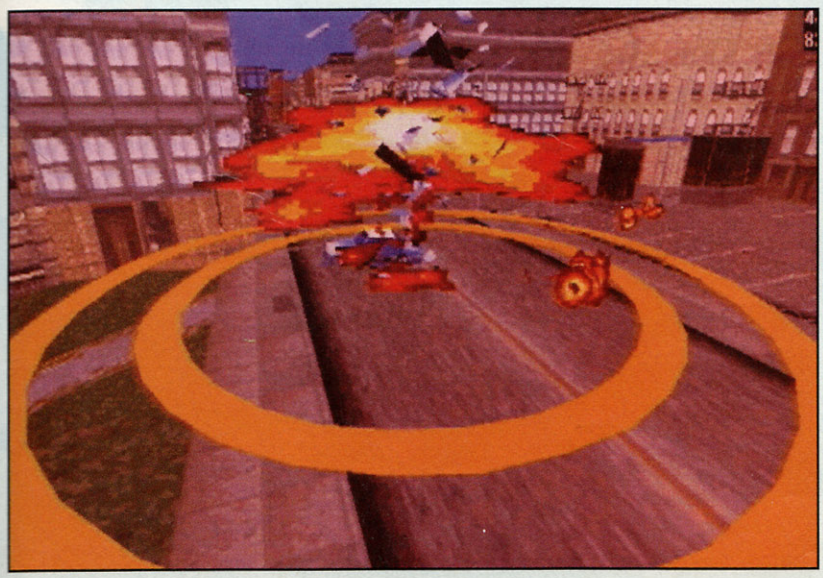
destroy just about everything you see on-screen, from terrorists and passing flight attendants to taxis in the car park and drunken English tourists in Union Jack boxer shorts. Again, there are the traditional shoot 'em up power-ups: play your cards right and you'll be unloading a rocket-launcher into the airport gift shop, or hurling fragmentation grenades into the Hari Krishnas around the ticket desk. There are eight frantic stages to blast your way through, shouting unconvincing apologies to innocent bystanders as you go.

Die Even Harder Still

(I think that's 'Die Hard: With A Vengeance', actually – Ed.) Finally, the third section has you taking to the streets in a series of automobiles and going slightly bananas. The brother of Alan Rickman from the first film, another terrorist (these things seem to run in families – but is it nature or nurture, that's what I want to know), has set a number of bombs around New York, leaving you with the choice of finding them before they blow, or just leaving the city, having a damned good holiday, and coming back when it's all over. Inexplicably, but luckily for the game designers, you choose the former option.

Each level is based on a location from the film itself, and involves you driving like a lunatic through busy traffic, following the on-screen indicators to each bomb's location. As you hurtle about you'll be ramming cars, running over pedestrians and crashing into bombs to set them off (there's something slightly illogical there... I'll spot it eventually). Then doing it all again in a different vehicle and a different location. Pick-ups give you extra time or a turbo boost.

It's fast, frenetic and completely OTT, and looks like being a bit of a humdinger when it's finished – if only because it's not often that you get the chance to run about in a grimy, sweaty vest. We'll give you a full review next issue, but in the meantime watch your armpit hair in those explosions. Z





(Above) Oh *yes*, spontaneously combusting traffic wardens. Like it!

(Left) Okay, pal, hand over the packet of Persil. I said hand over the fecking Persil, you soaponarope!

(Below) Aw, *quelle domage*, like, I winged the guy painting the double yellow lines by mistake. Shucks!

Product details

Developer: Fox Interactive

Publisher: Electronic Arts

Telephone: 01753 549 442

Format: CD-ROM

Release date: February



Eek-A-Mouse

Aren't you glad you haven't got a PlayStation? If you owned one, and wanted to play this game on it, you'd have to buy a light gun. (You could have used the controller to play the game, of course... if you wanted to die every 1.37 seconds.) So you'd have coughed up for the gun. And you'd have felt very silly standing around in your living room with a big, brightly-coloured pistol in your hand, firing at the telly. Not only that, but the bloody things only work with about two games, so they're a huge waste of money – and they're so brightly coloured you can't even use them to rob your local building society. They'd laugh in your face and beat you senseless with paperweights. The PC version works with a mouse, just like *Virtua Cop*. So it won't cost you anything extra to play it – and since you'll never be tempted to rob a building society with your mouse, you'll also never have horrible scars on your forehead that spell 'Woolwich' backwards.

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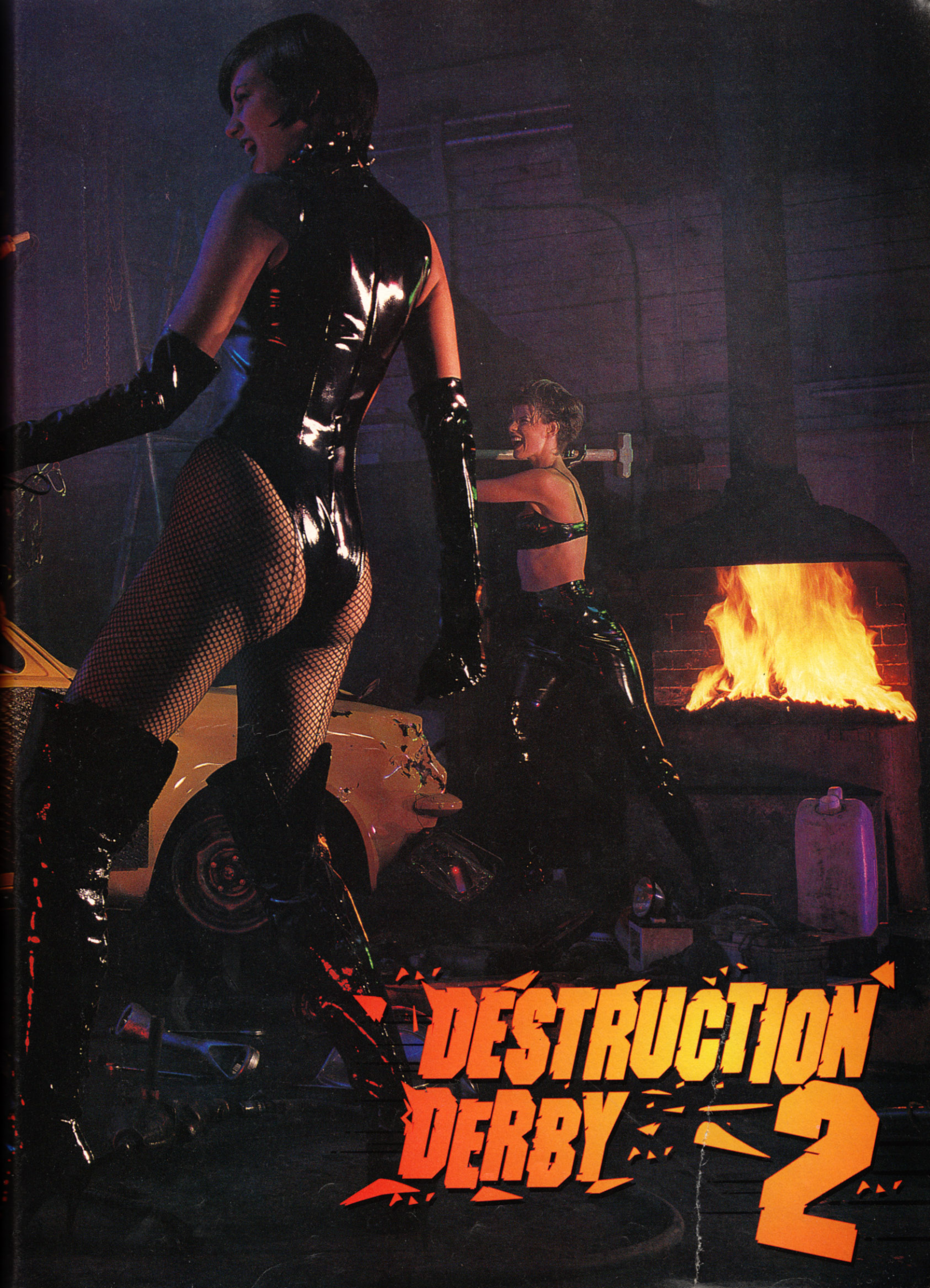


PlayStation

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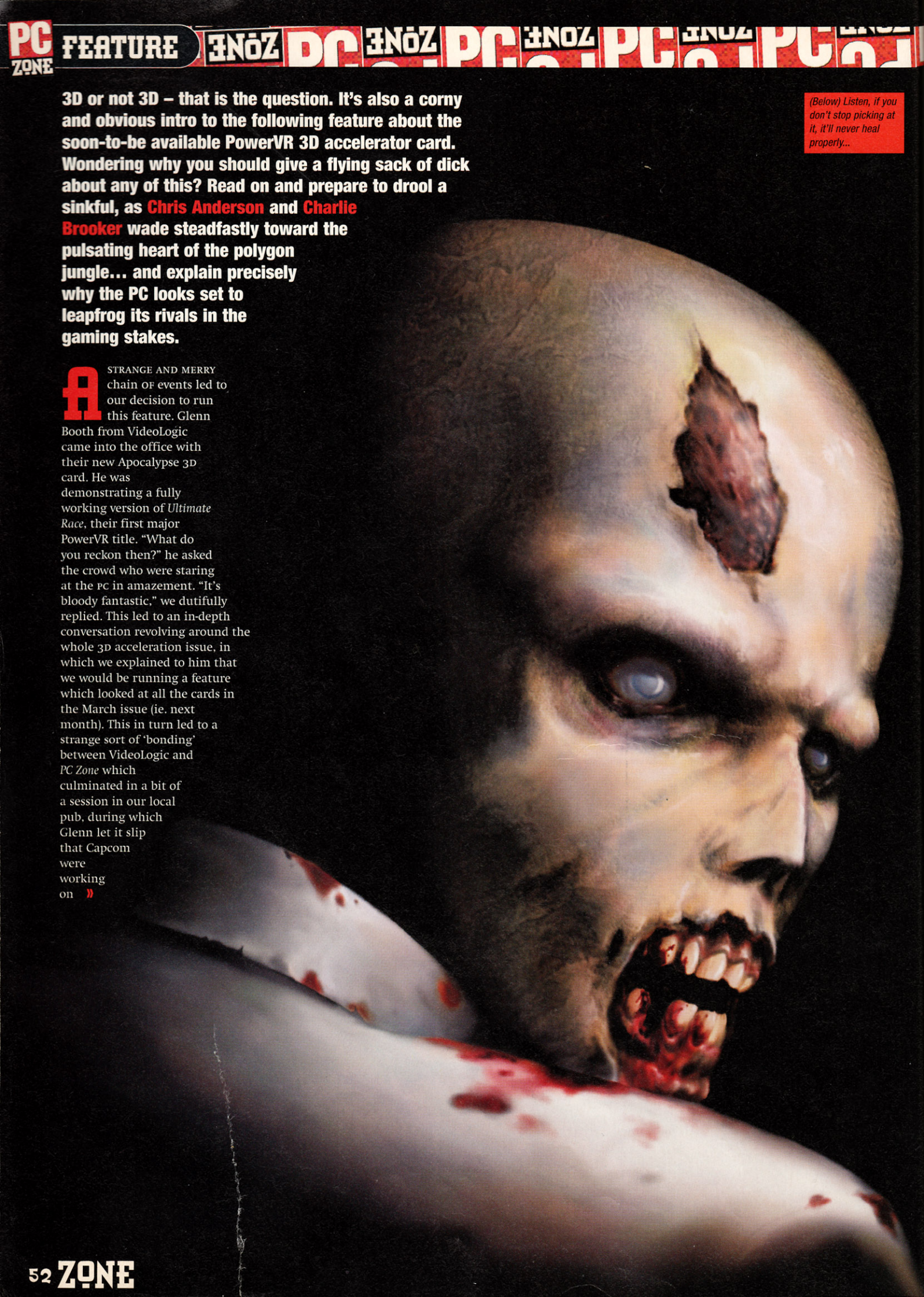
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DESTRUCTION
DERBY 2

3D or not 3D – that is the question. It's also a corny and obvious intro to the following feature about the soon-to-be available PowerVR 3D accelerator card. Wondering why you should give a flying sack of dick about any of this? Read on and prepare to drool a sinkful, as Chris Anderson and Charlie Brooker wade steadfastly toward the pulsating heart of the polygon jungle... and explain precisely why the PC looks set to leapfrog its rivals in the gaming stakes.

A STRANGE AND MERRY chain OF events led to our decision to run this feature. Glenn Booth from VideoLogic came into the office with their new Apocalypse 3D card. He was demonstrating a fully working version of *Ultimate Race*, their first major PowerVR title. "What do you reckon then?" he asked the crowd who were staring at the PC in amazement. "It's bloody fantastic," we dutifully replied. This led to an in-depth conversation revolving around the whole 3D acceleration issue, in which we explained to him that we would be running a feature which looked at all the cards in the March issue (ie. next month). This in turn led to a strange sort of 'bonding' between VideoLogic and *PC Zone* which culminated in a bit of a session in our local pub, during which Glenn let it slip that Capcom were working on »

(Below) Listen, if you don't stop picking at it, it'll never heal properly...



PUT ON YOUR 3D GLASSES NOW!

RESIDENT EVIL

When was the last time you sat in front of your monitor and were *genuinely frightened* by something *apart* from your own reflection? Unless you've been playing single-player *Quake* recently, the chances are that your spine hasn't been effectively tingled for months; although many games try their damnedest to create an atmosphere of brooding menace and lurking horror, genuine poo-on-pant moments are disappointingly rare. Which is just *one* reason why the imminent arrival of Capcom's *Resident Evil* is worth celebrating.

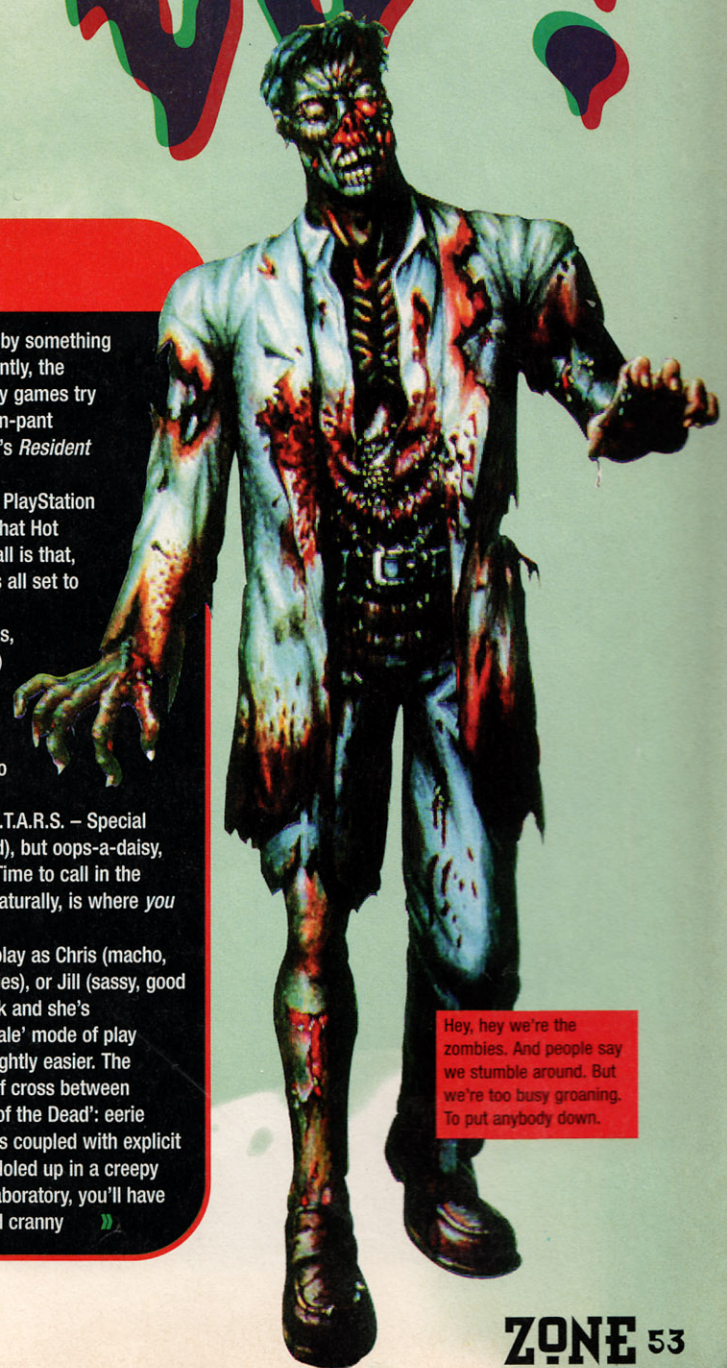
You're doubtless familiar with the title already – the game has been browning the knickers of PlayStation owners worldwide for quite some time now, in the process racking up the kind of sales figures that Hot Cake manufacturers can only dream about. Now it's on its way to the PC. And the *best* news of all is that, thanks to the cunning deployment of much additional PowerVR-friendly coding, the PC version is all set to make the PlayStation original look like a manky old Spectrum game (well, almost).

Heavily influenced by *Alone In The Dark*, not to mention countless schlock-horror zombie flicks, the 3D polygon combat-and-questing nature of the gameplay marks an unusual (and heartening) change of direction for Capcom, a company previously famed for their *StreetFighter* series of 2D beat 'em ups. The storyline is simple: there's been some kind of catastrophe at a top-secret Biotech lab, hidden deep in the middle of the countryside. The government has already sent in a troop of gung-ho buckshot-guzzling commandos (known as S.T.A.R.S. – Special Tactics and Risotto Squad), but oops-a-daisy, they've all disappeared. Time to call in the back-up team – which, naturally, is where *you* come in.



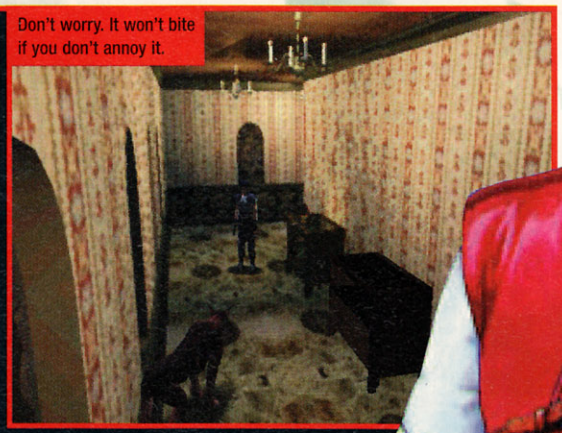
Some gory shit be going down in th' corridor, dude.

Players can choose to play as Chris (macho, clean-cut, eye for the ladies), or Jill (sassy, good at picking locks, one drink and she's anybody's), with the 'female' mode of play being – as per usual – slightly easier. The ensuing drama is a sort of cross between 'Scooby Doo' and 'Dawn of the Dead': eerie haunted-house creepiness coupled with explicit exploding-head viscera. Holed up in a creepy mansion-cum-research laboratory, you'll have to explore every nook and cranny »



Hey, hey we're the zombies. And people say we stumble around. But we're too busy groaning. To put anybody down.

« – solving a series of taxing puzzles en route – in order to find out just what *exactly* has been going on. To make life difficult, the chambers and corridors are populated by a veritable 'Muppet Show' of shambling, flesh-gnawing zombies, oversized animals and other bloodthirsty aberrations of nature, all of which display an unsettling desire to deck the halls with your internal organs. So if you don't want your intestines re-employed as carnival bunting, you'd best have your wits about you.

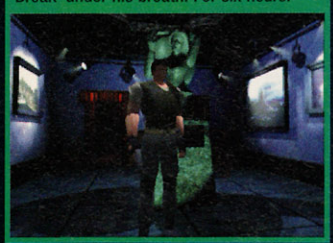


Don't worry. It won't bite if you don't annoy it.

SHOCK CORRIDOR

I've already mentioned *Alone In The Dark*, and indeed it's hard not to. *Resident Evil*'s structure is incredibly similar. The entire operation is viewed from a variety of different (fixed) camera angles, with static, pre-rendered backdrops making up the scenery. Rather than feeling restrictive, however, this technique lends the proceedings a distinctly cinematic appearance – especially since the viewpoints have been expertly selected for maximum atmospheric effect. At times, the air of menace is nigh-on palpable. Animation throughout is equally superb (gritty realism being the order of the day) and some of the beasties in the game's closing stages are scary enough to leave your ringpiece performing countless tiny gulping spasms, rather like the mouth of a large fish that's found itself washed up on the beach on the hottest day of the year (*was that* really *necessary? – Ed.*).

As he stood alone in the gallery, Chris hummed the theme tune to 'Give Us A Break' under his breath. For six hours.



"Yo, Jill, honey, watch me shoot this one right in the eye."
"Naaah – go for the mouth. I like it when their teeth fly out."





But it's the sheer amount of vivid *gore* that's truly shocking. The design team have clearly viewed the full canon of George Romero 'Living Dead' flicks, and decided that *grand guignol* is the way to go. Heads pop open like gristle-packed water balloons, limbs are blown away in sticky showers of blood and bone, groaning zombies feast upon fallen victims like hogs scoffing at a troughful of oat slops; this is *not* a game for the children.

GRUE AND IMPROVED

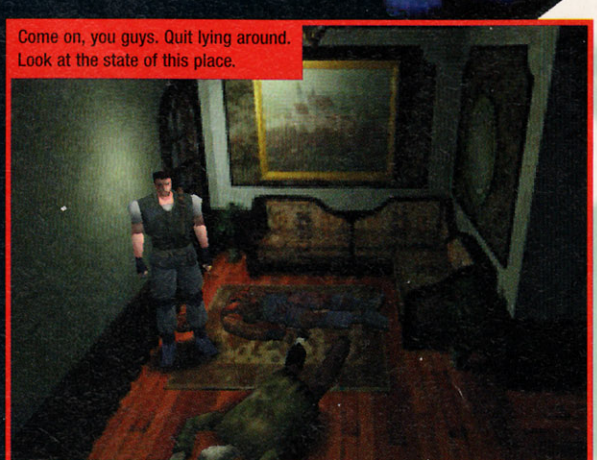
So, what about those PowerVR-specific improvements? Well, the Windows 95 version of *Resident Evil* I tested, whilst as yet unfinished, was noticeably superior to the familiar PlayStation edition. The animated characters moved with greater fluidity (at a rough guess, I'd wager that the frame rate has been improved by at least 20%) and were of a far higher resolution, with facial expressions and detailed clothing very much in evidence. For the final release, we are promised extensive use of the PowerVR card's hardware-based light-sourcing – which means mucho impressive misting and shadowing effects – and since it's a native Windows 95 'application', a near-as-dammit resizeable view. Hopefully, they'll also do away with some of the original's *irritants* as well – the clumsy savepoints, the confusing and unwieldy inventory system, and the intensely annoying pauses which occur as you move from one 'room' to another (during which you're treated to an initially tension-building, eventually frustrating sequence showing an approaching doorway). Here's hoping they don't change the appallingly stilted voiceovers, though. I always thought they *added* to the game's already twisted appeal.

Hi. My name's Barry. I'm six foot four, built like a circus strongman, and hung like a mule. Kissy kissy.

A zombie, having a friend for dinner. Ho-de-ho ho.



Come on, you guys. Quit lying around. Look at the state of this place.



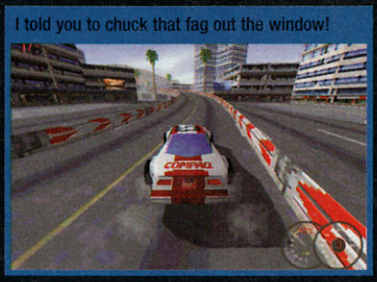
ULTIMATE RACE

It may be burdened with a rather crappy moniker, but *Ultimate Race* is without a doubt the finest looking driving game we've ever seen on the PC. Why? Because of all the eye-shaggingly impressive *PowerVR* jiggery-pokery, that's why – it's one of the select 'Extreme' range of titles. Running in a frighteningly crisp 800x600 maximum resolution at a very smooth frame rate, with all manner of lighting and misting effects hurled in on top, it's a *Ridge Racer*-style exercise in arcade motoring that should exhilarate the boy racer in just about everyone. If you want to see your console-owning pals for once turn florescent green with envy, this should do the trick nicely.

There's only one course, but before you all start booing and hurling rotten vegetables at the page, consider the following: it's a very long track, it has plenty of variety along the way, and most important of all – it's a damn good drive. Starting out on an urban highway, the game wastes no time in whisking the driver through a breakneck tour of picturesque Americana, as the route winds its way through underground tunnels, dusty red Arizona canyons, overgrown mud tracks and towering suspension bridges. There's even a perilous mountain pass to negotiate before you've completed a single lap, whilst the inclusion of several knuckle-whitening hairpin turns should ensure that even budding Damon Hills will find it a worthy challenge.

You are presented with a choice of five cars, any one of which would cause Jeremy Clarkson to lock himself in the bathroom and touch himself in ways and places that you or I can only dream about (in our most graphic and unsettling nightmares), and three different playing modes to drive them in – Time Trial, Single Player vs Computer Opponents, or best of all, Multiplayer. Alongside the prerequisite network or serial link options, the developers are promising *smooth* Internet play (we'll believe *that* when we see it).

And do you want the *really* good news? It's *free*. Sort of. *Ultimate Race*, you see, comes bundled with the PowerVR card itself. We've been playing it here in the office (using a PC steering wheel, 'cos we're spoilt), and although it isn't quite finished yet, we'd be the first to confirm that it's all set to make bloody big waves in the digital ocean of PC gaming lore.



I told you to chuck that fag out the window!



Check out that lens flare. Any more realistic, and you'd be struck blind.



Think we took the wrong turn somewhere near Elephant and Castle, love.

Yes, it's an actual in-game screenshot. Bit of a looker, eh?

« a PowerVR version of *Resident Evil*. Conversation stopped. "Did you say *Resident Evil*?" we asked politely, and the rest, as they say, is history. Despite the fact we have a comprehensive round-up of all the 3D cards on its way for the next issue of *PC Zone*, we just couldn't wait that long for a glimpse of *RE* on the PC and as you can see from Charlie's report, it's pretty bloody smart.

PC catches up shock

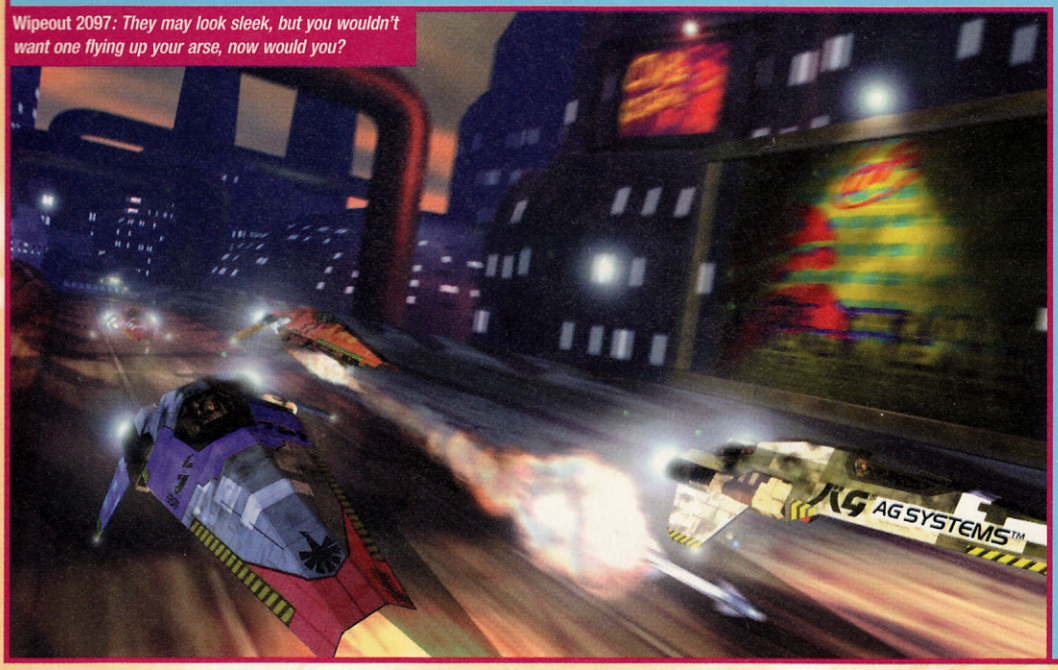
The fact that games like *RE* and *Wipeout 2097* are arriving on PC looking much better than their PlayStation predecessors is cause for much celebration for PC gamers all over the globe. For the first time ever, PC gaming technology has finally caught up with the 'super consoles' in terms of performance. This means that we'll be seeing fantastic conversions of all the best PlayStation titles and, better still, many new PC titles with graphics to die for.

At the forefront of the 3D revolution are VideoLogic with their PowerVR technology, and 3DEX with their Voodoo graphics chipset. This feature, for reasons best known to ourselves, concentrates on the Apocalypse 3D card, which utilises the PowerVR chipset (er, it might also have something to do with us getting the world exclusive on *Resident Evil*). The Apocalypse 3D card is »

WIPEOUT 2097

You know the one. The futuristic anti-gravity racing game that's sort of like a cross between joyriding and transcendental meditation. The one with cooler-than-thou Designer's Republic iconography tattooed across its eyelids, and the finest soundtrack ever to grace a mere computer game. The one that's filmed in high-speed hallucinogenic hypnovision; just the ticket for those got-back-from-the-club-but-I'm-still-off-me-noffers moments.

Upon hearing the news that *Wipeout 2097* is on its way to the PC, you could be forgiven for letting out a long, deeply unimpressed sigh. After all, the original *Wipeout* game didn't exactly make the journey twixt' PSX and PC unscathed. Having seen it in action on Sony's wonder box, we awaited the PC edition with lip-smacking anticipation, only to be let down sharply by a shoddy, slow, blocky travesty of a mockery of a sham of a thing. A cruel joke on PC owners everywhere, doubtless perpetuated by Satan himself. It should've been drowned at birth.



Wipeout 2097: *They may look sleek, but you wouldn't want one flying up your arse, now would you?*

But that was then, and things have changed. This time around, we're promised a version of *Wipeout 2097* that *really* does the game justice. Which means: a frame rate to die for (30 fps being the minimum), a bagful of lighting and transparency effects, a 640 by 480 resolution and the kind of colour depth that makes your retinas feel like they're being french-kissed by all the colours of the spectrum, one by one (and I'm not talking about the ZX Spectrum, either). The gameplay has also been given a major overhaul: not only are the ships easier to handle, there are more courses, ships and weapons than the original. And now your gunfire can actually *destroy* opponents, rather than just slowing them down.

If it's as good as the PlayStation version, we'll be twice as chuffed as Ivor the Engine. It may well be *better*. Expect game-on-shelf action sometime around April 1997.

DARK RIFT

Another Nintendo 64 game that's due to pop its cheery head over the PC gaming fence and cry, 'How's it going? Hawight?' to Windows 95 desktops everywhere. But only those with 3D accelerator cards. A graphically majestic exercise in graceful thuggery, it features combatants with scary names, bloody huge weapons and clanking robotic limbs. Very much in the *Battle Arena Toshinden* mould, in that aside from the aforementioned weapons, it also features full 3D movement (most fighting games – including *Tekken* – lock you into a two-dimensional plane), which means that if you see fit, you can nip around your opponent and stab him right in the side. The graphics are reassuringly smooth, the animation not-half-bad, and as for the amount of colour on view, the word 'mmmmmm' scarcely does it justice. Any special moves in it? Duhhh, yes, there are, Sherlock – and very painful they look too. Our favourite is the one where a 'Predator' lookalike impales his victim on a great big curvy sword, then lifts it over his (spectacularly ugly) head, before slamming the unfortunate wretch down to the floor with a scornful air of disdain. What a rotten bastard, eh? You never see Sir Cliff Richard doing things like that. To little children. On national television. More's the pity.

The game is currently being developed by Vic Tokai, who are yet to release their first PC corker, but this might change all that. From what we've seen and played so far, *Dark Rift* is rather smart (but could do with a wee bit of tweaking if it wants to *really* tickle our collective fancies). If they bung Sir Cliff in as a hidden character, we'll give it 98% (100% if he gets to beat up children too).



Come and have a go if you think you're weird enough.



Two of the Dark Rift *kicking crew. Don't fancy yours much. Still, you know what they say about big feet.*

UP AND COMIN'-AT-YA

1997 looks like being the year in which 3D accelerators *really* make their mark. Don't believe us? Well, you really ought to. We recently had a sneaky peek at a list of just *some* of the up-and-coming releases which will be making the most of these new-fangled 3D card things. Many details are sketchy at present, but here's a selection of titles scheduled to support the Apocalypse 3D card at the time of writing. Let's face it – it's *about bloody time* us PC owners got one up on those console fanboys.



TEKKEN 2

Yes, it *is* on its way to the PC. Yes, it *will* be 3D-enhanced. And *yes*, it is a bloody smart game. Non-stop bone-cracking hilarity, lightning-fast gameplay, and possibly the motliest crew of fighters yet seen in a videogame. Here's hoping they make a good job of it. As soon as you hear more details, start saving for a pair of joypads and a large tub of anti-blister cream.

SHADOWS OF THE EMPIRE

Yes, that's right, the Nintendo 64 game. 'Star Wars' arcade-style action in a dope 3D style-ee. If games had genitals, of a size directly associated with the degree of graphical majesty contained therein, *Shadows of the Empire* would be hung like a 78-foot donkey. During the mating season. And it's coming to a PC near you, soon. Honest. Look, it says so here in black and white...

MECHWARRIOR 2

MechWarrior 2 may be 'the most OEM-ed game in history', but there's no denying that, when it comes to explicit robot-on-robot action, it's the bee's knees. Well, take a look at this. Guess what: it's the PowerVR version of *MechWarrior 2*. It runs in a sparkly 640x480 and it features 24-bit colour as standard. Yum. And like *Ultimate Race*, it comes bundled with the card itself. A top game with top graphics, and surely your only *real* chance of being able to empathise with Barry Sheen, by walking around for hours on a pair of metal legs.

ID4

'ID4' – that's 'Independence Day' to you, sunshine – is one of those movies that always was tailor-made for a videogame translation (amongst others that spring to mind: 'Rambo', 'Tron', '120 Days of Sodom' and 'The Adventures of Buttman'). Surprisingly, it hasn't been developed by Bethesda (a company with strong links with the 'ID4' production team – apparently the Jeff Goldblum character is loosely based on Chris Weaver, Bethesda's boss hog). Looking at the distinctly *Afterburner*-esque nature of the code currently on view, perhaps that's a pity. On this evidence, it's a distinctly rum exercise in simple, mindless blasting based on the aerial combat sections of the film. Ho-hum. Still, it looks quite nice, it's very fast – and hey – it's still early days. Maybe the finished product will be the greatest thing ever in the history of stuff. Or not.

F1 RACING

Being that thar PlayStation game with Murray Walker on the soundtrack. More screaming tyres than you'll find in a horror film directed by, starring, and aimed at tyres. Should give *Grand Prix 2* a run for its money, eh?

SIMCITY 3000

Like *WC5*, it's a long way off, but three things are certain. One – it'll benefit from the cunning deployment of a 3D accelerator. Two – it'll sell by the shopful. Three – it'll be made of magic magnetic chocolate, and will be able to fly and do silly backflips and things. (*If I find out that you made that last point up, I'm going to beat you to within an inch of your life – Ed.)*

WING COMMANDER 5

It's so far off, EA probably haven't decided whether to call it *Wing Commander 5*, *Wing Commander V*, or *Wing Commander Five-a-live-oh* yet, but current indicators suggest that it *will* fully support the Apocalypse 3D and that it'll be great. Or as great as they can make it. And we can exclusively reveal that it'll all be set in space.



TERRACIDE

If you glance at the screenshot, you might come away feeling distinctly unimpressed. That's because you haven't seen it *move* yet. Trust us, it looks luvverly. Sixty frames a second, 16-bit colour depth, hi-res graphics, with more funky coloured lighting effects than a season of '70s 'Top of the Pops' re-runs. The game is a kind of *Doom/Descent* hybrid (in fact, it's *very* similar to *Descent* – on the surface), and if it's as exciting as it looks then we'll be happy as Larry. Larry Grayson, brought back from the dead and locked in a room full of naked sailors. Deep inside a vaseline factory.

AND THERE'S MORE...

There are *tons* more 3D-friendly games on their way. No, really. They're all backed up inside the lower intestine of gaming development hell right now, but they're pencilled in for release before the year is up. Next month we'll be poring over the list in more detail. For now, we'll simply mention the following: *Pod* (Ubisoft), *Virtua On* (Sega), *MechWarrior 3* (Interplay), *Agile Warrior* (Virgin), *FX Fighter Turbo* (GTE) – not forgetting enhanced versions of *Tomb Raider* (EIDOS), *Descent 2* (Interplay), *Azrael's Tear* (Mindscape), *SU-27 Flanker* (Mindscape), and *X-Wing vs TIE Fighter* (LucasArts). Drooling yet? Thought so.

« a standalone piece of hardware which is used solely for bringing spectacular 3D effects to PC games and increasing the frame rate these games run at. It slots into your PC alongside your existing graphics card and takes on most of the acceleration tasks normally done by your microprocessor and existing graphics card. It features an NEC PX1 high performance 3D accelerator with 4MB of texture RAM. This handles all the texturing, lighting and fogging effects utilised by the latest 3D software and takes the strain off your system. So you'll be able to play games with real shadows cast from any object over any surfaces that are updated every frame for super smooth 3D action.

These games feature 'real' translucency that can be applied to whole objects, polygons or individual pixels for fantastic real-time effects like fire, water and even simulated lens flare and radiosity. If you're a bit confused by all this, don't worry, we'll be taking a more in-depth look at the technology that drives PowerVR in the next issue, when we'll be putting all the 3D cards currently (and soon to be) available through their paces and looking at the games still in development. In the meantime, check out the screen shots in this feature for a taste of what PowerVR can do. One thing's for sure - PC games have changed forever. Z

APOCALYPSE 3D GAME PACK OFFERS



GAME PACK 1 (Order ref: VID2) Become the proud owner of your very own Apocalypse 3D card for only £139 plus VAT and P&P (£169 inc) and save £20 off the recommended retail price. You'll get the full retail pack with *Ultimate Race* and *MechWarrior 2* thrown in, and the first 100 readers to order will be given a totally orgasmic Apocalypse 3D T-shirt and baseball cap absolutely free.

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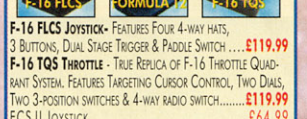
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PCY (2)

REVIEW ZONE



This month's lead review is the totally fantastic *Command & Conquer: Red Alert* from Westwood, the prequel to one of the biggest PC games ever. Is it better? Have they finally got round to improving the artificial intelligence? How hard is it to play over the Net? Turn the page and find out...

THE ZONE SCORING SYSTEM



90+ *CLASSIC*
The highest accolade a game can attain. A wonderful example of gaming excellence that deserves to be recognised and indeed cherished, or something.



20 and below *PANTS*
Absolutely bloody awful. Crap with a capital C. Naff with a capital N. You get the picture.



80–89 *RECOMMENDED*
An excellent game that simply lacks that certain something that makes it one of the true greats. Well worth checking out, though.

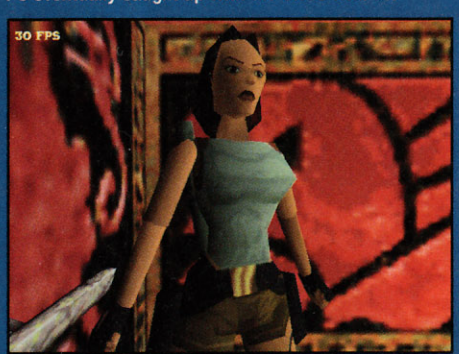


486 FRIENDLY
The DX2 is still one of the most popular spec machines, but how do you know what games will run on the thing? This icon shows you which games you can still enjoy even if you don't have a ninja Pentium.

Looking back

PCs: are they crap or what?

When I first started fooling about with PC games I was playing *Leisure Suit Larry* and *King's Quest* in glorious four-colour CGA with absoutely shite sound emanating from my PC speaker (sound cards were yet to be invented). At the same time, my mates were playing games on their Commodore Amigas with fantastic graphics (for the time) and 'proper' stereo sound. I didn't care. Not one bit *(Liar – Ed.)*. Things got better after a while, with the arrival of 16-colour EGA and primitive sound cards such as the Ad Lib. By then, the Super Nintendo had come out which made the PC look worse than ever. Nightmare. The PC eventually caught up with the SNES with the arrival of VGA and SVGA graphics and fantastic sound cards. Excellent. Then along comes the bloody Sony PlayStation with its incredibly colourful graphics and stupidly impressive frame rates. Bollocks.

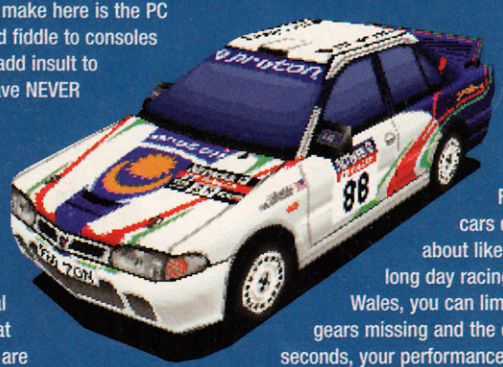


The point I'm trying to make here is the PC has always played second fiddle to consoles as a games machine. To add insult to injury, console owners have NEVER had to arse about with machine configurations to get their games running. It is with great pleasure, then, that I can confidently tell you that all this is about to change. We've got several new 3D cards in for test at the moment, all of which are running games that piss on their console counterparts from a merry old height. Even Windows 95 seems to finally be getting its act together with DirectX 3 proving to be much less of a nuisance than its younger brothers. So back to my original question – PCs: are they crap or what? The answer is 'no', at least not anymore. Check out next month's 3D feature and I'll tell you exactly why.

Chris Anderson
Deputy Editor

Network Q RAC Rally

We love *RAC Rally*. The graphics and courses are outstanding, the sound and weather effects superb, and the mixture of game options are enough to keep you at it for weeks. But after much playing, a few niggles have arisen from the wonderment.



Firstly, the other drivers' cars don't seem to get battered about like yours: at the end of a long day racing around the armpits of Wales, you can limp home with a couple of gears missing and the clutch slipping every few seconds, your performance suffering accordingly: theirs never seem to. It would add more realism and sense of the event to see others wreck their cars and lose time, and be told about it at the end of stages. At the moment, you do tend to feel a bit isolated.

Secondly, faced with consecutive stages of different surfaces – say, tarmac and snow – you have to compromise your tyre and car settings, and your times aren't as good on either stage as they might be. Again, computer drivers' times don't seem to reflect this.



PROCESSOR-HUNGRY
Some games run slowly, even on high-spec machines with ninjascopic graphics cards. Just run something like *Magic Carpet* in hi-res on virtually any PC and you end up with something running in Jerk-o-vision.



WINDOWS 95
Speaks for itself really – if it's got this icon slapped on it, it's been designed to take advantage of all that Windows 95 offers.

90+	CLASSIC
80-89	RECOMMENDED
70-79	GOOD
50-69	AVERAGE
40-49	BELOW AVERAGE
20-39	POOR
20 and below	PANTS

In perspective

This is designed to be a pure visual guide as to how games of a similar style and genre compare to one another. The bars do not relate to previous review scores... they are simply an indication of how the reviewer feels about the products on a sliding scale.

Game 1

Game 2

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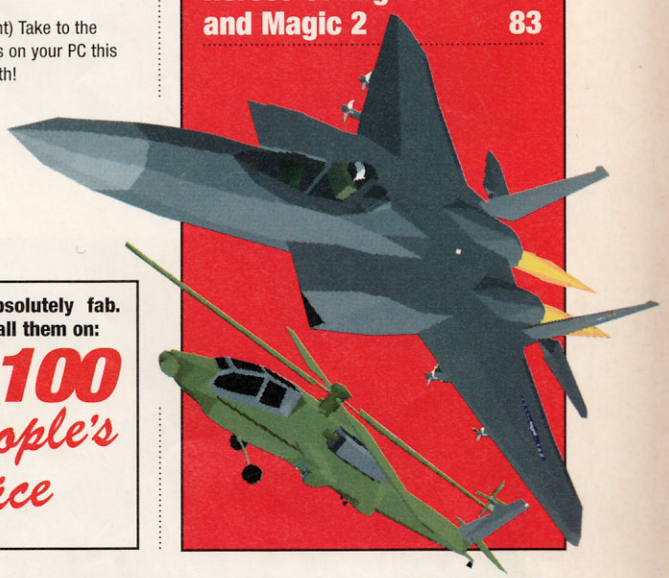
The People's Choice

Thanks this issue to
- Skip from EA (for the doughnuts)
- Patrick and Glenn from VideoLogic
- Cierann from Bastion for lots of things
- Tufty for road safety tips
- Jason from MicroProse for the Premiere
- Alison Beasley for a top night out
- Nic from EA for being there
- Ben from Activision for having an unpronounceable surname

(Right) Take to the skies on your PC this month!

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The third (and most annoying) niggle I'd like to mention concerns the invisible roadside barriers: on some stages, like Donington Super Special, some corners are like driving down an invisible tube. You bounce off nothing, and it's really infuriating. Despite this, we still love the game, but the boys at Europress might like to bear these points in mind for the next one.

Patrick McCarthy

Creatures

Millennium's *Creatures*: what a strange game that is! Well, it's not a game as such – as you may have gathered from our review in Issue 45 – more a 'parent simulator' as you attempt to raise, and eventually breed your very own digital beings.

Creatures is completely absorbing from the word go. The Norns, as they are called, emerge from the incubator gooey-eyed and pretty much up for anything you can throw at them (which includes the back of your hand, if you're into bringing up your children the 'old fashioned' way). Getting them to do what you want is great fun, if a little daunting at first, and teaching them to recognise verbal commands prompted much cooing and gushing. Those Norns are just *so* cute! Crikey, listen to me go on... it must be good.

I would recommend playing the 'game' by yourself, though. The first time I saw it I sat with a friend as we



hatched our first Norn – him at the controls and me on the instruction manual (short straw or what?) – and found myself having heated arguments with him about hitting the kids, and 'not bringing them up properly', which is nothing short of downright scary.

So looking after your *Creatures* is an obsessive pastime. Make sure you free up at least a week before you even consider playing it.

Paul Mallinson
News Editor

Cool games

We see hundreds of games over the months but there are a few that we hang on to and continue to play at lunchtime/when we're supposed to be doing more important stuff...

Tomb Raider
C&C: Red Alert
Realms Of The Haunting
Sim Copter
NBA Live '97

Crap games

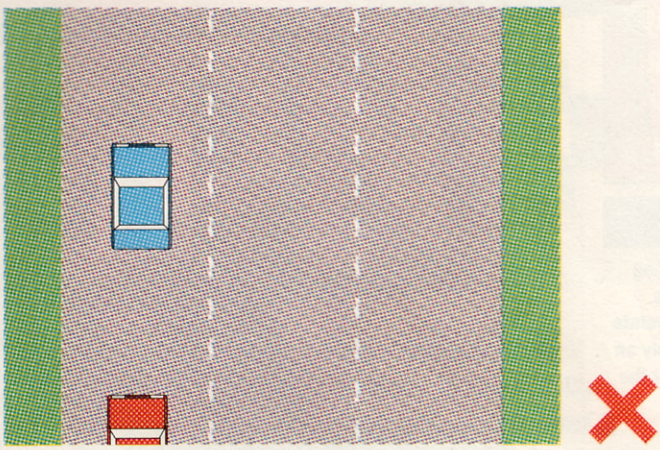
There are some games that you can leave in the middle of the room with a big sign next to them saying "please steal me" and you still can't get rid of the bloody things...

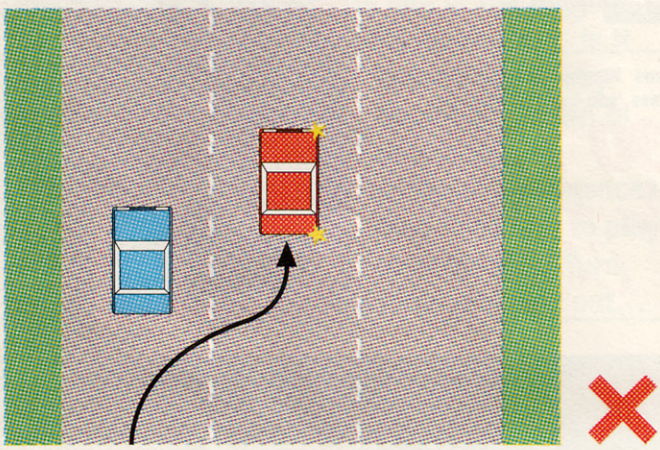
Daytona USA
Ashes To Ashes
Power Rangers
Animal
Charades (on Boxing day with ya folks)

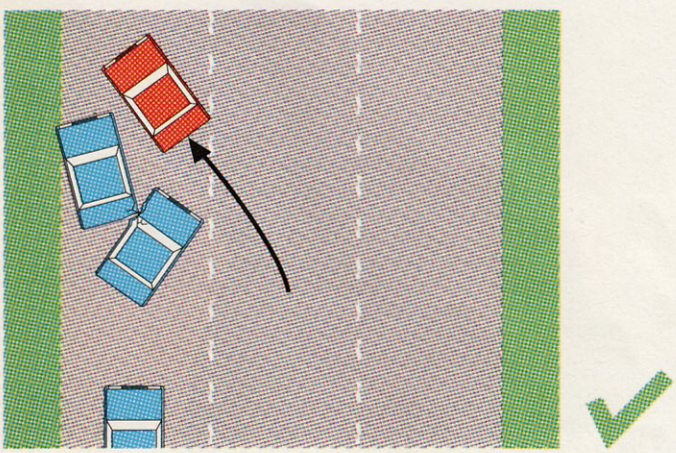


Name: NITRO RACERS™ **Format:** PC
Style: Top down, smash 'em up racing
Graphics: 1200 frame animation
Features: 30 different race tracks, upgradeable cars and pit crews, octoplay
Author: Studio 3DO, http://www.3do.com
When: Now **Where:** Anywhere good

3.7 Overtaking

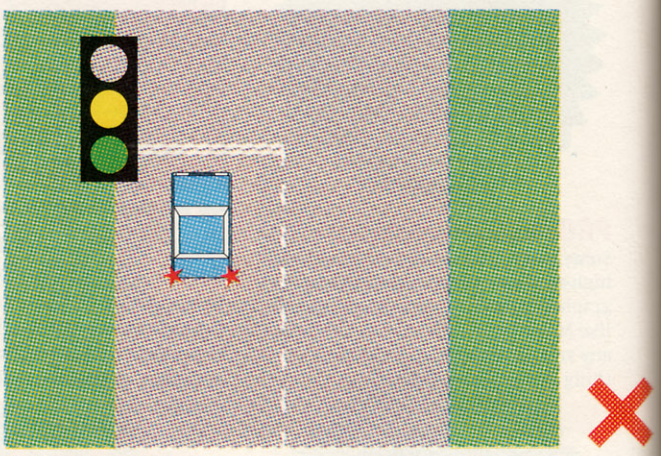


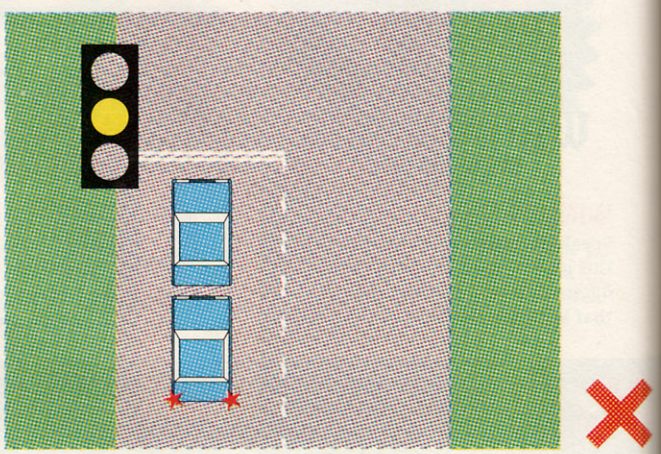


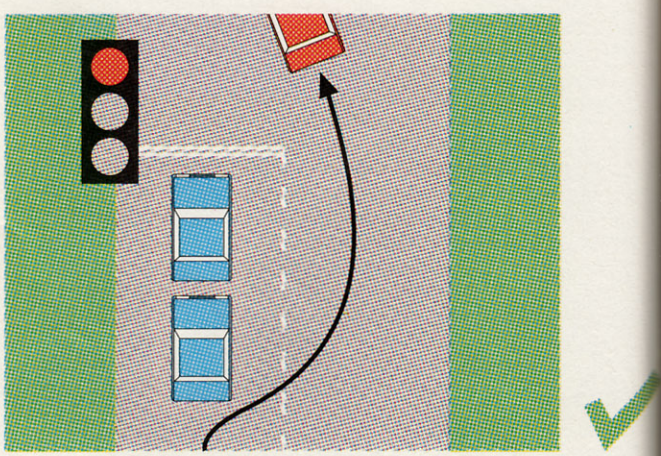


- Lane discipline is nonsense - you pay your road tax, use all the lanes.
- Do not overtake unless you can cause serious damage to other vehicles.
- Once you have started to overtake, quickly swerve back in front of the vehicle you are overtaking.
- **If in doubt - OVERTAKE**

5.2 Traffic Signals

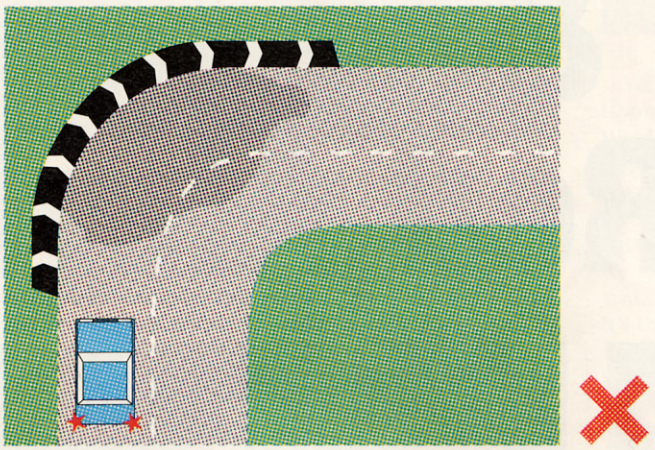


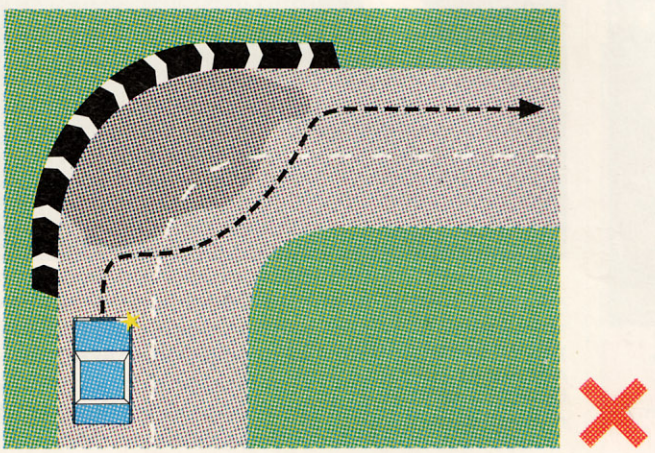


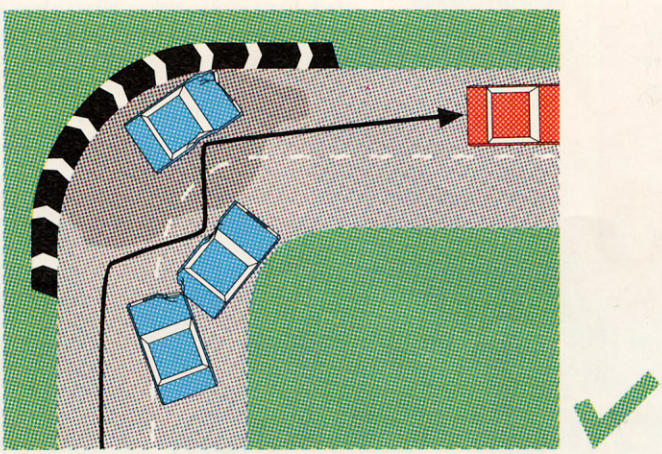


- Lights are for Christmas trees.

9.4 Hazardous Surfaces

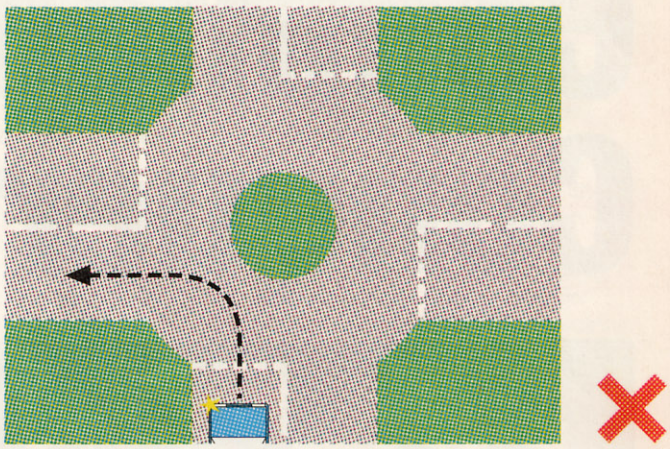


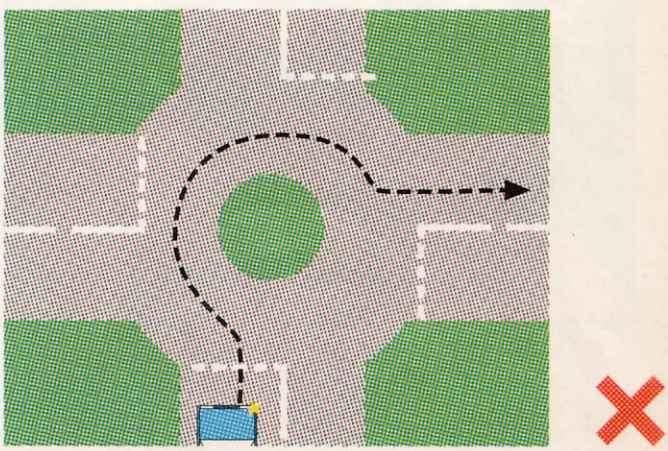


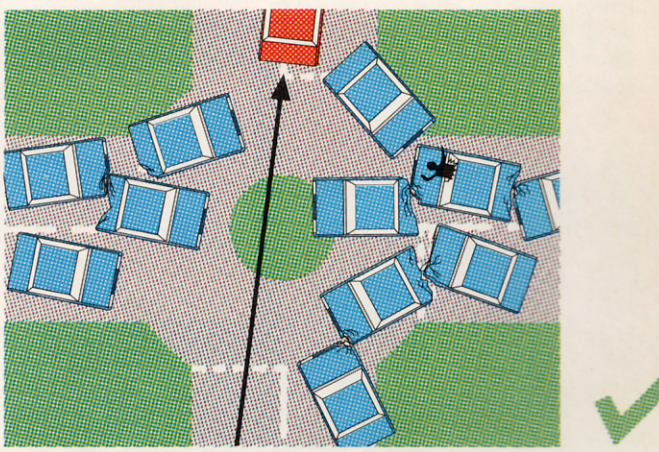


- Ice can be dangerous, your steering may be affected.
- Should you find yourself skidding, position your vehicle in the path of oncoming vehicles.
- Use your brakes sparingly.
- **Remember - mirror - signal - manoeuvre - IMPACT**

12.0 Approaching Roundabouts







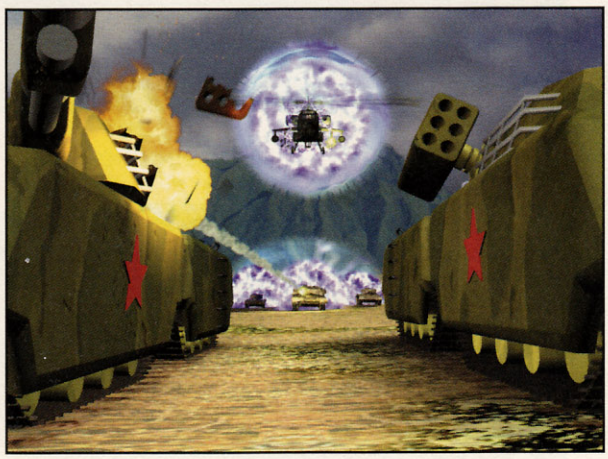
- On approaching a roundabout, decide as early as possible which lane you need to take in order to create the most carnage.
- Increase speed, this is good for your adrenalin build-up.
- Show no consideration for other road users, especially those on horseback.
- Hone these skills. Prepare for Nitro Racers.™

Charlie Brooker knows all about the harsh realities of armed combat. War-torn landscapes haunted by the shrieks of the mutilated, and the ceaseless crackle of gunfire hold few surprises for him. The charred remains, the cloying pools of stale blood, the shocking clarity of glistening, gaping headwounds – they're like old friends. That's what living in Kentish Town does for you.

PC ZONE CLASSIC

Command & Conquer: Red Alert





(Left) The new hi-res mode means that you get to see a lot more on screen and it's also far more detailed (obviously).

(Above & below) Just like the first game, the cut-scenes are utterly gob-smacking.

COMMAND & CONQUER, Westwood's phenomenally successful real-time wargame, was a runaway success. During the peak months of its popularity, it sat on more hard disks than a dyslexic prostitute manages throughout an entire career. You played it, I played it, we all played it. Some of us even linked up and played it head-to-head, in an orgy of tactical manoeuvring and relentless bastardry that would have given Ghengis Khan a cob-on you couldn't dent with a steak tenderiser. And now we have a sequel, of sorts. *Red Alert* is, apparently, *not Command & Conquer '2'*. No, it's more like *Command & Conquer: The Previous Generation*. As if you didn't already know, the action is set in an alternative version of the past in which Hitler never made it to power. In fact, he never made it very far at all: Albert Einstein, no less, managed to nip back in time to 1924 and bump off the would-be Fuehrer before he could wreak much in the way of havoc. How's that for a successful bit of reverse-engineering?

Far from ideal, actually. Einstein's time-travel assassination may well have erased the malevolent Zebedee from history altogether, but it also had an undesirable side effect. Aside from robbing the world of an easy insult to hurl at traffic wardens, it









In Perspective

***Red Alert* is the *C&C* clone to end all *C&C* clones. Which, er, stands to reason really. In fact, since it's already on sale, you're probably aware of that already. However, in case you *aren't*, here's a chart showing how big its 'computing willy' is compared to some similar, rival titles:**

Command & Conquer: Red Alert

Command & Conquer

Gene Wars

M.A.X

(Above) Despite what know-it-all Yanks say, *C&C Red Alert* is quite difficult, especially if you haven't played the first game.

(Above right) The missions are a lot more structured and you'll have to meet certain objectives within each level in order to complete it. Hurrah!

paved the way for another moustachioed despot to start entertaining the prospect of total world domination, namely big Joe Stalin. Without World War II to keep him and his troops busy, he decided that the ideal way to stave off that indefinable, omnipresent sense of ennui (commonly known as 'peacetime') was to invade as many countries as possible. Painting the globe red, if you like.

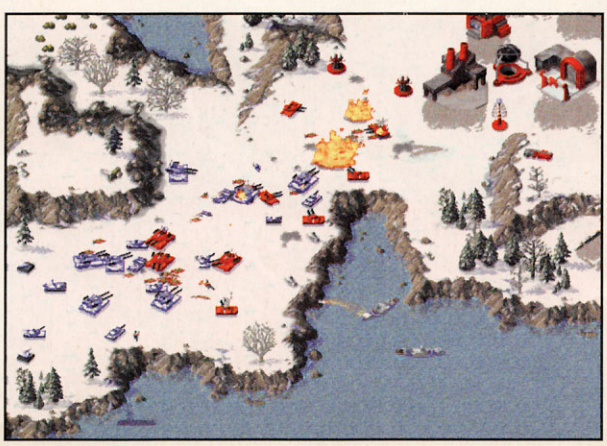
So, the lights are going out all over Europe – and it's down to you to switch the buggers back on.*

**Unless you're playing as the Soviets, obviously, you pedantic tosser.*

C&C carnage factory

Now, assuming that you're familiar with *C&C numero uno*, what you'd probably like to know is this: how does *Red Alert* compare to that and, most importantly, which bits have *improved*?

(Below) The levels are all pretty large and generally well thought out. Westwood have included an easy-to-use level editor so you can construct your own and then play against your mates in network mode or just head-to-head. Smart!



Well, the graphics, for one thing. If you happen to be playing under Windows 95, it's SVGA city for you (a slightly non-comformist 640 x 400 resolution to be precise). I won't even start to bang on about how lovely and detailed it is (because you can see that for yourselves) since natty visuals aren't exactly the point here. It's the *gameplay* we're interested in. And while that seems to have remained more or less the same, the wealth of new units and structures send the fun factor scaling to new heights. Paratroopers, guard dogs, submarines, medics, spies... on paper they sound like small beer, but in the game itself they're a godsend.

The single-player missions display more variety than the ones on offer in 'old' *C&C*; they're also a damn sight harder (unless you play on the 'easy' setting), with the learning curve resembling a brick wall on occasion. Some of them will induce a severe case of desk-thumping, tooth-gnashing 'monitor rage' (get through mission five playing as the Allies *without swearing out loud* and I'll send you £1,000). As ever, you can choose to play as either side, with the Soviet missions being, to my mind, faintly superior to the Allies' equivalent.

But the multi-player options... ahhh. Now that's where things start getting *really* cool... »

A 'hooray' for arms

There are more weapons in *Red Alert* than you'll find in all the schools in South London put together (and that's a boast that even our own armed forces can't make). Many are familiar friends from the original *C&C*, but there's a decent quota of new big boy's toys chucked in too. Here we present a brief list of some of our favourites – and a few of our *un*favourites – from the new batch.

TOP WEAPONS

Attack Dogs

Dogs? *Dogs?* What use are they, then? What are they going to do, sniff the opponent's arse until he runs away in embarrassment? Er, no. While your pooch contingent is admittedly rather less use than a glass hammer when it comes to mammoth tank invasions, they come into their own against lone enemy characters bent on sneaky base infiltration. Their unerring habit of leaping unexpectedly at the throat (instantly killing the throat's owner) makes them deceptively deadly.

Boats!

Wahey! Now you can have *complete* control over your very own fleet. Gunboats, cruisers, transporters and full-on destroyers (or submarines, if you're playing as the Soviets) are a laugh and a half. Cruisers, in particular, are capable of blowing all they survey into powder, often before the enemy knows what's coming.

Parachute Bombs

Once you've built an airfield, why not let your opponent know – the nasty way. Parachute bombs are just what you think they are – albeit slightly deadlier than you might expect.

Tanya

Red Alert's female equivalent of *C&C's* commando character. Tanya is nails. Absolutely nails. A sharp-shooting demolition expert, she's the ideal choice for bundling into a Chinook and landing unannounced in the centre of your opponent's base. And she's got a nice line in catchphrases, too (if I ever shoot somebody in real life, I hope *I* remember to shout, "Cha-CHINGGG!")

PLOP WEAPONS

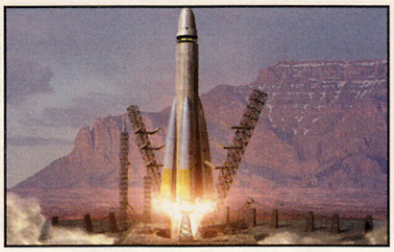
Atom Bomb

The atom bomb is a major let down. It takes an age to construct – and for what? Let's face it, if you've got to the point where you're about to drop one of *these* on your enemy's head, you want to see something *special*. You want widespread destruction. Roaring, 'Independence Day'-style walls of flame. Radioactive, mutating victims vomiting blood all over their new trousers. 'Genocide: the movie' – that's what you want to see. A weedy little mushroom cloud effect that's gone in a puff of smoke just doesn't cut the mustard, I'm afraid.

Paratroopers

I have yet to deploy paratroopers and watch them do anything remotely useful. Five of 'em just aren't enough – especially since it takes them a while to float down to earth (during which time the opponent invariably decides to get a bit of target practice in) – and since they're only armed with standard machine guns, their lifespan tends to swing towards the 'Mayfly' end of the scale.







(Above left) Like the Yank said: "Naval power rocks, man!" Quite.

(Above) There are still problems with the AI and this can get very frustrating in the heat of play. You'll click on a group of men and one will wander off in the opposite direction. This tends to happen when crossing bridges or passing through narrow tracts of land. The only thing to do is just grin and bear it and keep a close eye on your units.

Tech specs

Memory: 8Mb (16Mb recommended)

Processor: 486/DX66 minimum (Pentium for Windows 95)

Graphics: VGA/SVGA

Sound: SoundBlaster & compatibles

Controls: Mouse, keyboard

Note: 28.8 modem required for Internet play

« Aggregated aggression

Red Alert has loads of new (and amusing) multi-player options- my favourite being the Allies' sneaky (and shockingly handy) ability to construct fake buildings – *à la* 'Blazing Saddles' – in order to fool the enemy. There are radar jammers, ore thieves and invulnerability devices. But all these new additions – superb though they are – are not the *special* thing about the multi-player options.

The special thing about the multi-player options is that they all *work*. They're easy to set up (even I managed it) and incredibly good fun to play. Within 30 minutes of installing the game on my home PC, I was playing head-to-head (via Westwood's server) against a guy in New York. Despite the odd slowdown, the game ran smoothly and with no visible glitches. Incidentally, my opponent pissed all over me. Being an American, he celebrated his victory with grace, dignity and by sending the message, "YoU sUcK!!!" about a million times. Such decorum.

So the Internet option works. Head-to-head modem mode works. And anyone who's got access to a network can start rubbing their hands together at the prospect of seamless eight-way action. But what about those of you who don't have any of those things? Aren't you going to feel left out?

Nope. Because thanks to the superb 'Skirmish' mode, you can play against up to seven computer-controlled opponents, with all the special multi-player features switched on. It's a great way of trying out some of the more advanced hardware, and widens the old 'addiction window' considerably. Oh, and there's even a map editing program bunged in, so you can build your own battlefields. Neat.

Summing up

Red Alert is one of those 'time sponge' games. You *think* you've been playing it for half an hour, but a quick glance at the clock reveals that it's now the year 1999. It's brilliant – the gaming equivalent of an 'unputdownable' book. What more can I say? Not a lot, really. Check the score. Z

Score

94

I'm lost for words...

Price: £34.99 **Release Date:** Out Now
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COMMAND & COCKER

Real-time strategy is the order of the day as you attempt to guide Jarvis Cocker into combat, across 18 gruelling levels of intense battlefield action, ie. Michael Jackson's personal Theme Park, so you can moon at him. Oh, and you've got to make sure he doesn't get beaten up by any eight-year-old girls (and boys), too.

COMMAND & CONKERS

Real-time strategy is the order of the day in this mouse-driven conker-shattering epic. Soak them in vinegar, bake them overnight in the oven, hollow them out and fill them with iron – just don't lose your nerve in this non-stop game of Gladiatorial chestnuttery.

COMMAND & CONQUER: ROD ALERT

Real-time strategy is the order of the day, as Rod Hull has a fight with Rod from *Rod, Jane And Freddy* in this rowdy Rod-related riot of a game. The winner gets to fight Matthew Rodd. Armed with a rod. In Rodlington town square. (*There's no such place; your ceaseless straw-grasping fills me with pity – Ed.*)

COMMAND & CONCUR

Real-time strategy is the order of the day in this relatively dull addition to the genre. This time, the action takes place during a political summit, and your aim is to actually reach some kind of agreement with everyone else. Mind you, in the evenings, you get to cruise around town with your own entourage, pissing taxpayers money up against Johnny Foreigner's walls. So it isn't all bad.

Old MacDonald had a brain, a-i, a-i, o

If there was one aspect of *Command & Conquer* that invited criticism, it was the Artificial Intelligence – or lack of it – that your troops made use of. All too often, what happened was this: you select a group of soldiers, then click on a destination. As far as you can tell, it's a few feet away. But oh dear – there's a tree in the way. Cue much gnashing of teeth as your company of halfwits decides to take the scenic route instead; a serpentine trek through all four corners of the map, especially the bits filled with mass groupings of enemy firepower. As a result, many basic manoeuvres end up resembling a sponsored walk through South Central LA, on national 'Shoot Whoever You Damn Well Please' day.

The *good* news is that this kind of aimless sauntering happens with far less frequency in *Red Alert*. The *bad* news is that it *does still happen* – from time to time at least. The problem worsens dramatically when you try to order large teams around – especially if they're boats (which often seem hell-bent on circumnavigating the globe).

Now, at this point I could get all soap-boxy, high-horsey and more than a little tub-thumpy. But I won't, because I can only see one *definitive* solution to the problem: the introduction of step-by-step marker points for troops to follow en route. And if you're going to do *that*, you may as well go the whole hog and make it into a hex-addled, turn-based bore-a-thon. Not like *C&C* at all, in other words.

What I'm trying to say is this: the AI has improved, but it still isn't 'perfick'. And until Westwood can bless the onscreen troops with psychic powers, I don't see how it can be. At times it's annoying, but it certainly doesn't spoil the game (*à la Actua Soccer*'s retarded goalkeepers). So stop whining and just enjoy things as they stand.

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Duncan MacDonald's been rambling incoherently about finishing missions and not caring about missing the last bus home, all the while gazing at the office PC. We tried to help him return to normality by forcibly prising the *A-10 Cuba* CD out of his hands but the withdrawal symptoms were simply too horrible...

A-10 Cuba





(Left) At this point I entered a wierd 'mind-loop' and my head went all squiffy.

(Above) Forget rotatey bitmaps and stretched pixelscape texture blending, just look at those gorgeous polygons, willya? Perfectomundo!

(Below left) I *was* going to get a cab home at this point, then I though – why not fly?

(Below right) And here I am, parachuting out over Camberwell Green, Moses, the security guard, having preceded me. Waytahgo, Moses!

FIRST, A SORT OF APOLOGY. I previewed *A-10 Cuba* last ish and at one point said "the playing areas are a tad on the smallish side". Doh! In retrospect I was talking a complete load of arse: the playing areas are in fact massive. Still, you'll have discovered this for yourself if you've checked out this month's cover disk.

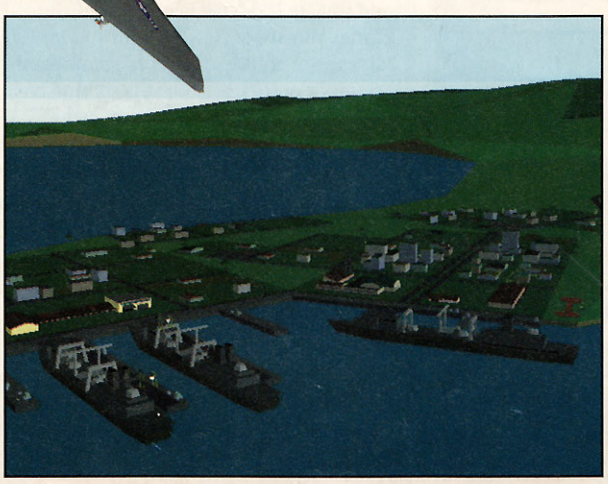
Actually, I'm going to assume you *have* checked out the cover disk, so if you're reading this on the bus – like on the way home from the shops or something – can I ask that you skip these two pages and come back once you've done the biz? Please? It'll make much more sense if you do, and then you can agree/disagree with what I'm saying, and get all annoyed if you think I'm spouting bollocks and so on. Yes? Ta. The rest of you follow me...



A question of detail

I played *A-10* on the office P166 (and, briefly, on Jeremy's P133) with all the detail and distance settings set to max. The result was as smooth as a baby's bottom. How did things fare on your system? Were the settings you chose acceptable? I hope they were. If, however, they weren't, all I can say is this: upgrade, upgrade, for God's sake upgrade. I may as well add that if *A-10* didn't function properly on your machine, then I doubt that any recent flight sim would... and I don't mean to sound obnoxious here, and I'm truly sorry if you're skint and have outstanding red leccy bills or court fines and what have you. Hmm. Okay, okay, I feel guilty now – look, I'll lend you the money for a P120. Just send an SAE to the *Zone* address and I'll return it with a cheque. *(Yeah, right. – Ed.)*



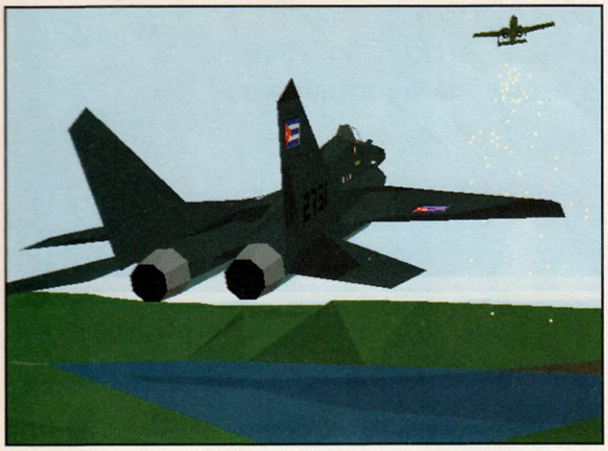


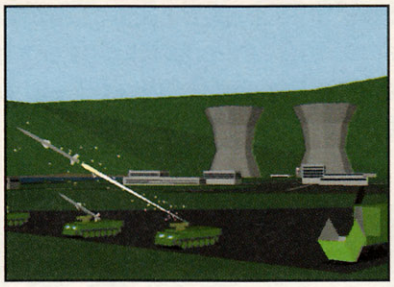
Stop waffling!

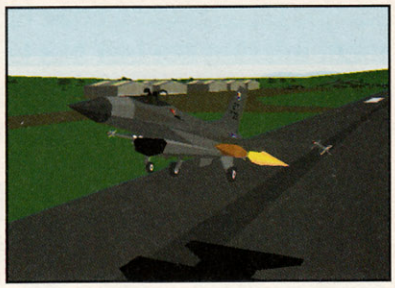
Anyway, where was I? Oh yes, you've played a bit of *A-10 Cuba*, and you'll pretty much know where it's coming from. So all I can do is tell you where I think it's coming from and you can sit there nodding (or perhaps shaking) your head. Okay?

Right. *A-10 Cuba* is like a breath of fresh air. It's almost like discovering the flight sim for the very first time. Sod all your rotatey bitmaps and stretched pixelscape texture bending: here we have perfection in polygons, and the longer you play the bloody thing the more perfect it becomes... until it's so unbelievably brilliant that you enter a weird 'mind-loop' and your head goes all squiffy. Mine has. Has yours? If it hasn't, then you haven't played the game properly. Go back and have another go. I'm right and you're wrong, it's as simple as that. And I'm not even willing to enter into debate about it. *A-10 Cuba*, as far as I'm









« concerned, is one of the best flight sims I've ever played. Indeed it might even be *the* best flight sim I've ever played. Consider the facts...

The facts

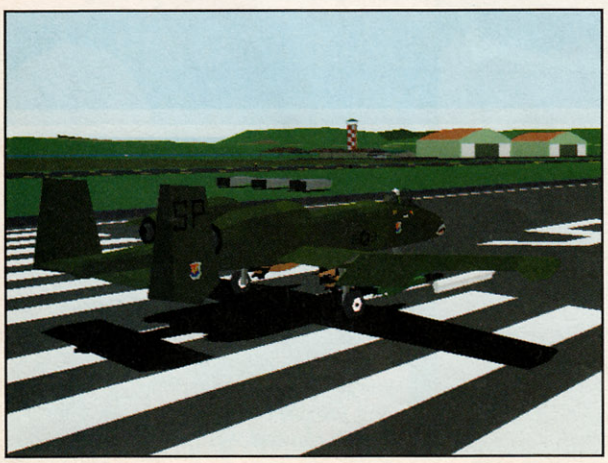
(1) After playing it for the whole weekend, I intended to leave the office and head home at about 10PM Sunday evening But no. I couldn't stop playing this game. I even dragged Moses (one of the Dennis Publishing security guards) downstairs, to show him how unbelievably skill it all was. He concurred. He now wants to buy a PC.
(2) If I'd left the office when I intended to I could have got a tube home, which would cost a quid. But I carried on until 1AM, fully aware that I'd have to pay six quid for a cab instead. I didn't care.
(3) It's now 1.55AM and I've finally made it home: as I write these words there's an OU programme blaring away on the telly, and it appears to be about how to walk up a hill in Scotland without dying. Not that I could care less, of course, as my mind is elsewhere...
(4) 'The best sense of altitude in any game ever – bar none.' That's one of the little notes I made on a piece of paper earlier, while flying at 16,000 feet. I'm reading it back now, and I still agree. We've all stared out of a plane's window while flying to Tenerife or wherever. We all know what 33,000 feet looks like – and in *A-10 Cuba* it looks like double what I was looking at when I wrote the note. Look, just trust my maths, okay?

(Above right) "The best sense of altitude in any game ever" – yup, that's what I wrote and that's what I meant.

(Above centre) There are even little cars, trucks and ferking tanks that you can move around the airfield!



(Bottom) The zebra crossing outside Tesco's, where Mr Cursor finally lost his fear of traffic lights. Can you spot the tiny Junior Masterchef underneath the port wing (as in Ruby Port and chicken)? I quite like children, but I couldn't eat a whole one. This caption's getting a bit surreal, eh?



More facts

(5) Little cars and trucks move about in towns and around airfields. You can attack them. You can even taxi along roads and 'overtake' them. I used to set up this kind of stuff in *Stunt Island*. Brilliant, brilliant.
(6) While on the subject of taxiing, we hit the age-old problem of not being able to stray off the runway without exploding. Or, rather, we don't. The program takes all the variable velocity/terrain equations and does remarkable maths. You bounce, you get bogged down, you can even skid. And more, and more. So much more...
(7) I spotted a road going into a tunnel. "Can I get in there too?" I wondered. Bugger me sideways, I could! And okay, so I emerged the other end with a busted wing, and crashed over the edge of a hairpin bend into oblivion, but hey! Fantastic!
(8) Fire extinguishers for your engines! Continue to fly with a bit of your tail section blown away (tricky but possible)! Crash land and survive (even on the side of a hill), due to being 'clever with flaps and throttle'. On and on. The rewards fly at you thick and fast: satisfaction isn't based on just earning medals.

More room please...

I'd sell my soul to the devil for a bit more space here, because I could go on for another 19 pages. Alright, so there's a teensy bit of 'pop-up' occasionally. And yes, the sun looks extremely silly. Oh, and maybe it'd have been nicer if the planes you shoot down didn't suddenly 'disappear' so unconvincingly. But these are moot points: *A-10 Cuba* is so bloody enjoyable that it's... er, sort of, erm, well, like making an excellent spaceship out of Lego when you were nine. (Or something.)

And, to lay my cards on the table, I haven't really got that far into any of the 12 missions yet: I keep getting distracted. You know the kind of thing I mean: "I wonder what happens if I do this, do that, do the other?" And that, for me, is the mark of a superior game – you're given a realistic world and you do with it what you want. Then (and only then) do you feel like digging deeper, following the rules and suchlike... by which time you're ready to *enjoy* the challenges rather than feel dictated to. (If you're of a more regimented mind, of course, you don't have to piss about at all; just read the manual, do the missions, earn medals. You sad git.)

Finally, finally...

If you've the networking facilities, the four-player option is a hoot – with a handful of imaginative scenarios (one of which is in outer space... asteroids with runways). I'll end with a bum note, though, and it's this: DirectX. I personally don't even understand what DirectX *is*, but I do know that (a) it's down to Bill Gates in some way, and that (b) it stopped *A-10 Cuba* working on my machine at home, apparently due to a sound or graphics card incompatibility. (Which is why I was in the office until one o'clock, rather than here at home writing this; and why I had to fork out six quid on a cab.) Still, what do you care? Z

Tech specs

Memory: 8Mb (16Mb recommended)
Processor: 486DX2/66 (Pentium rec.)
Graphics: SVGA VESA local bus or PCI video card with 1Mb video RAM required
Sound: 100% DirectX compatible sound card
Controls: Mouse (joystick recommended)

Score

90

DirectX aside, it's the most hum-diggidy groovesome flight sim ever.

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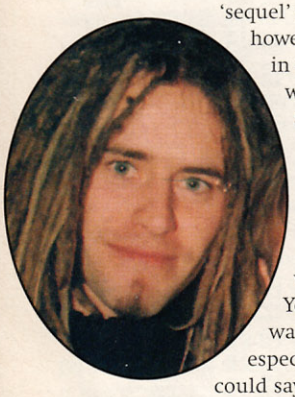
Grand Prix Man

Remember the original *Grand Prix Manager*? If you do you'll probably remember that it was pretty smart but soon became quite unplayable because it contained so many bugs. So now we have *Grand Prix Manager 2*, the sequel. Is it better? And more importantly, is it still bug-ridden? Duncan MacDonald takes it through a few hairpin bends, with the help of a not-so-famous-any-more teeny bopper to see if it's improved...

YOU KNOW THE INTRO JUST SAID that *GP Manager 2* is the 'sequel' to *GP Manager*? Er, well, it sort of depends on your definition of the word, to be honest. My dictionary says this: **Sequel**, se'kwel, *n*. That which follows; a succeeding part.

Fair enough.

Here's the definition of the word 'sequel' as I see it, however, when used in conjunction with *GPM2*...



Sequel, se'kwel, *n*. The same as before, but this time the bugs are fixed and it actually works.

You see? If you wanted to be especially harsh you could say it's a bit of a fiddle, really. Mind you, having said that, there are some additions and 'tweaks' included, so I suppose I'd better give you a rough outline of what they are.

(1) The interface has been jiggled with, making navigation through the myriad screens a tad easier. Nevertheless, there's still some backtracking required when you need to visit inter-related screens (which makes it easy to 'lose your thread', as it were).

(2) The drivers' feedback after test sessions is more helpful. You're told specifically what they did/didn't find edifying about their car set-ups, meaning it's less of a guessing game this time round.

(3) When on the overhead in-race track screen, the cars don't 'disappear' any more, which was always a wee bit of a bummer in the first version. *(© Massive Understatement Ltd.)*

(4) There's telemetry info during races, but when you compare it to the telemetry graphs from Crammond's superb *GP2* it's pretty nonsensical. Just squiggles, really.

(5) The helicopter view: a small PIP in which pixel sizes are doubled, meaning your tiny SVGA dot of a car becomes a slightly less tiny VGA dot of a car. (Or something.)

(6) And that's about it, really.

Howard from Take That* grabs hold of the

Hi, I'm Howard, from pop sensation Take That. Since the split I've been getting into F1 racing, big-time, and I reckon I could take a team to the top of the charts... not of the pop charts, obviously, but of the, erm, the whatever they call the same sort of thing in motor racing. Team charts? Car charts? Whatever. I'll show you. Watch and learn.

1 Gary, Mark and Robbie have all managed to get back into the Top 10 with their solo careers. And Jason? Um, I don't know what he's been up to, actually. But me, I don't need to make another record, because I'm taking over Williams here. Yes! I've changed the name of the team to Number 1 (a position I'm very familiar with, as you'll know) and have typed over Frank Williams' name with my own. Oh, and you see where it says 'change logo'? Well, you can, but you can't customise it. (Mind you, I'm no good at drawing so maybe it's just as well.)



2 Hmmm. I've been clicking on all the icons and I've ended up on this one. It seems I have to choose and hire my personnel. Oh, wait a minute... actually, I don't have to. Eh? Why not? Oh, I see. Aha! Because I selected 'quickstart' rather than 'longterm', all that stuff has been done for me. Thank God for that, because I'm not very good at 'choosing things'. I expect I'd have had to look at salaries and suchlike, and I'd have to 'remember' who was the best, and who couldn't do this, or could do that... and I'm even worse at 'remembering' than I am at drawing.



3 Oh. This looks a bit complicated. It's the car externals screen, which I know (seeing as I looked up the word 'external' in the dictionary) is the bit that deals with all the things that get put on the 'outside' of the car. Luckily, this being quickstart, it's been done for me, and I approve of everything. Oh, wow, look, there's a wind tunnel. They used one of those on the video shoot for 'Back For Good'. It made my hair blow about. I was wearing a wicked shirt in that. It was made out of chiffon or something, and I've still got it, actually, but I haven't worn it for ages.



4 I've just clicked on my 'desk diary' icon and this screen has appeared. What it is, I think, is the list of tracks for the coming Grand Prix season. They're all in different countries, you know, and they're like all completely different shapes and that. The trouble is I've just remembered something Murray Walker said on the telly once, which is about different car 'shapes'. He said that you have to change the shape of your car for every single circuit. Oh no! So that's about, erm, one... two... three... nine... about 400 different shapes. *(16 actually – Ed.)*



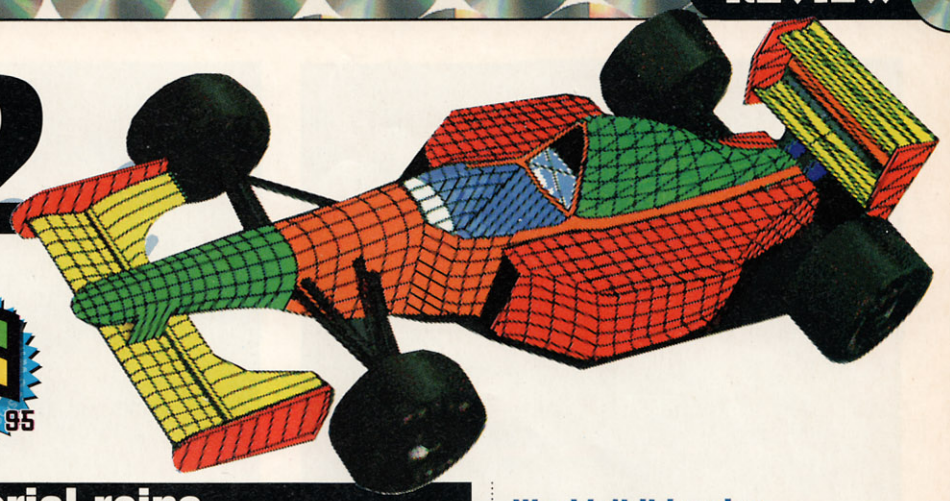
5 I asked my agent Pippa to help, and she e-mailed some bloke called Stephen Hawking, who sent this reply: "Select the Alter Race Calendar option and change every single track to Silverstone – which is your home base. Now you can test, extremely cheaply, on the very same track you'll be racing on throughout the year. Only an idiot could lose using this method, as the ideal car set-up (once you've found it) can be used again and again." I'm following his advice, but only because I'd already thought of it on my own anyway.



6 Time for the first race, then. I haven't bothered to change the 'shape' of my cars, because if this Stephen Hawking bloke is right my drivers will know the track like the back of their hand and it won't matter anyway. And seeing as I'm working on a song at the moment (Gary, Robbie and Mark may have beaten me into the charts, but I can still beat Jason), I haven't got time to sit through lengthy pre-race sessions. So I've disabled Free Practice, Qualifying, Pre-Race Warm Up and the Formation Lap. Just the race itself for a busy lad like me, eh?



ager 2

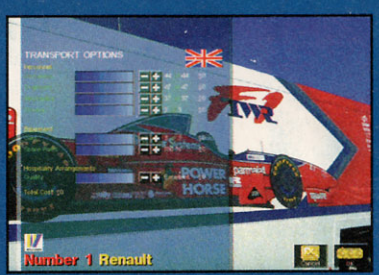


PC ZONE RECOMMENDED

WINDOWS 95

Williams Renault managerial reins...

7 Oh, hang on, we're not even there yet. What's this all about? Hang on, it takes me a while to take new things in. Er... oh, I get it, this is where I decide who and what is coming with me on the race weekend. Aaaah! Yes, brilliant, I understand now: that Stephen Hawking bloke knew his onions. Because we're at 'home' it's costing me nought quid to take everything. Superb. The only thing I don't understand is why my hospitality arrangements (set to 100%) are also costing nothing. Maybe the caterers are Take That fans. Yes! That's it! They still love me!!!



9 Eh? Something's gone wrong. My automatic qualifying session didn't put my drivers 1st and 2nd on the grid. Damien's in 18th position, and things have gone even worse for Jacques Villeneuve... not only is he 19th, but his name has changed to John Newhouse. Whaaat? What's going on? I thought this game started with the teams from the 1996 season? Still, at least it's sunny, so I can take off my shirt and exhibit my pecs. *(Explanation: Villeneuve's agent wanted mega-cash to use the Villeneuve 'brand name', so, rightly, he's been dropped. – Ed.)*



9 Aha. The pitstop strategy. Well, I'm not very good at adding up numbers and stuff, but it looks as though it's been done for me, so I'll leave it well alone: three stops for both the lads. I did do one thing, though, and that was to click on the 'orders' icon, where I told them to 'go for it'. Mind you, seeing as they're racing drivers I'd have expected them to do that anyway. You know? It's like someone coming up to me before a Take That concert and saying 'look hunky and sexy, and dance up a storm'. As if I wouldn't. I'd be unable *not* to. Unlike Gary.



10 Damien and 'John Newhouse' seem to have had a bad start: I clicked an icon so you can see them clearly... they're the ones with the little red and yellow boxes surrounding their cars. Not that I'm looking at the cars, of course – or the really badly drawn track. No, what I'm looking at is the aircraft landing strip area in the middle. I may not be earning much at the moment, apart from the odd royalty, but with what I've got in the bank I could easily afford a really flashy plane. And even a helicopter as well, and I've designed a uniform for the pilot, in my head.



11 This, apparently, is called 'telemetry information'. It means precious little to me, though. (As I've already told you, I have problems just adding up properly, so doing advanced stuff like times-ing numbers by other numbers or doing graphs and that is a no-no.) But the point is, I reckon, that if I'm like boss of this Grand Prix team, I wouldn't need to do that sort of thing anyway. I'd hire someone else to do it while I sat in my plane or my helicopter with loads of birds and Fergie and a couple of them Middle Eastern oil blokes.



12 I got bored and speeded up time so I could see if I won. And I didn't. Still, Damien did quite well, seeing as how he started off in 18th position. Actually, let's try and work this out... he started 18th and finished 7th. That means he had to overtake, erm, erm, erm, five cars. No, hang on, make that six. No, wait... seven? I'm not sure, actually. 'John Newhouse' wasn't so good, though: he dropped eight places. Back to the management screens then, to prepare my cars, drivers, sponsors and so on for the next race in the season: Silverstone! Yo!



Wouldn't it be nice...

In a really pleasant 'fluffy' world, where a British driver would win every Grand Prix, petrol and fags were free, and every house had a special tap that spouted beer, owning a copy of the first *GP Manager* – the bugged one – would automatically entitle you to swap it for this one. In the cold light of reality, however, you're going to have to fork out again. Or not, of course, seeing as even in its new 'it actually works' guise, *GPM2* is still the shonkiest of the three F1 management titles. The improvements that MicroProse have made are worth while, and they've obviously thought about the feedback (and the complaints) they received after the first game was released. Having played all the recent F1 manager sims, I'd say this was undoubtedly the best of the bunch, though there's still a long way to go in terms of presentation. Ho hum. **Z**

Tech specs

Memory: 8Mb
Processor: 486DX2/66
Graphics: SVGA with at least 1Mb VRAM
Sound: Win 95 compatible sound cards
Controls: Mouse
Note: Win 95 required

Score

80

Last time it hurt... this time it works.

Price: £39.99 **Release Date:** Out now
Publisher: MicroProse
Tel: 01454 893893

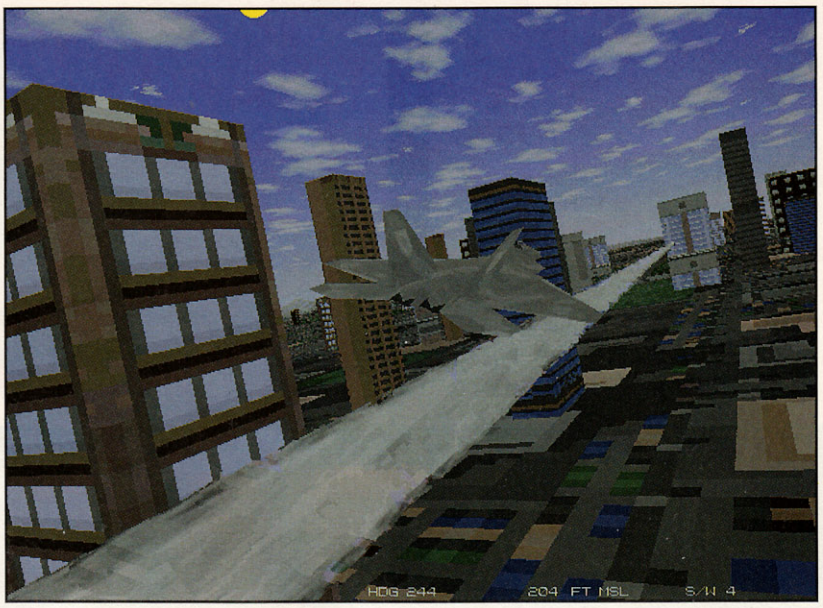
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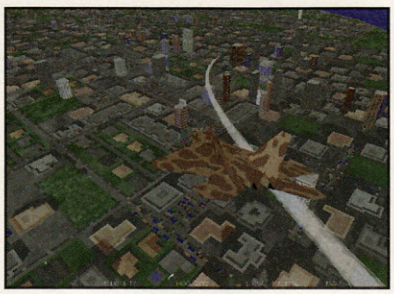
* Don't be ridiculous! This wasn't really written by Howard from Take That. It's just Dunc going off on one again! Doh! Stupid!



(Above) The map! Zoom out far enough and you can see, er, like loads of the world, but it won't be filled in till the data disks get made.

(Right) The sense of speed really is fantastic, believe me.





JUST IN CASE YOU GLOSSED OVER the intro, I'd better repeat the gist so you don't get confused. I'm slightly barking and sometimes hear voices in my head. One of these voices comes from 'Billy', just about the most obnoxious and argumentative bloke you'd be likely to meet anywhere in the world. He's a bastard and a wanker too. And he's completely negative. I hate him, especially when he makes the 'buzzing' noise which wakes me up at 4.30 in the morning. Unfortunately, he seems to want to co-write this review and there's precious little I can do to stop him (short of drilling into my temple with a Black & Decker – but that's exactly what he *wants* me to do, so I won't). He'll no doubt announce his entrances, so to avoid confusion I'll announce mine as well. I'm 'me', and he's (obviously) 'Billy'. Here goes...

It's the new *Jetfighter* game...

Me: I played the first *Jetfighter* on the Amiga yonks ago, and also the sequel *Jetfighter 2* on the PC. It moved like greased lightning, that one! And it was fully light-sourced too! But, you know, it still somehow looked a trifle 'flat'.

Yup, even back in those days. This latest *Jetfighter* incarnation, however, is anything *but* flat!

Billy: Do what? What are you? Some kind of sodding advertising copywriter or something? Arsehole. Of course it's not flat. This is 1997. Nothing's flat anymore. Tosser.

Me: Give me a chance, please...

Billy: No, why should I? You'll just pussy about like a half-witted ponce as usual. You'll simply stack up a bunch of good points, and then counter them with a couple of flimsy minus points at the end.

Me: Er... you don't know that for certain...

Billy: Go on then! Prove me wrong!

The front end...

Me: *Jetfighter 3*'s front end is quite nice. It's an FMV-ish aircraft carrier 'walkabout'. You can navigate through the ship in much the same way you navigated through *The 7th Guest* or *Myst* or what have you. There's the Ops room, the Briefing room, and, among others, there's even your own cabin – where you can access e-mail during the non-linear ongoing storyline.

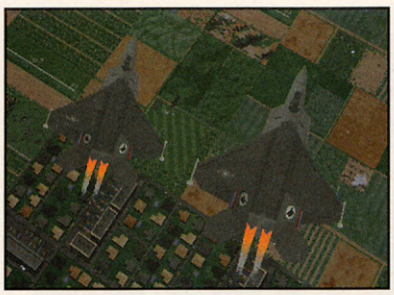
Billy: Jesus Christ! See? You're doing it already. You know fully well that this pre-orchestrated walkthrough business is engaging for about five minutes. It's eye candy. Why don't you say what you really thought? Go on, say it.

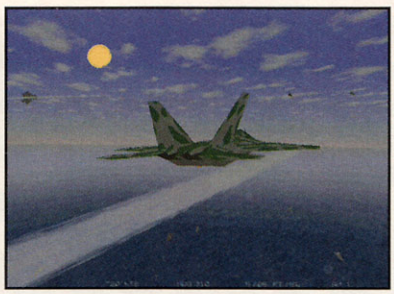
Me: Erm, well, it would've been quite

PC ZONE CLASSIC

Jetfighter 3

Duncan MacDonald is completely bonkers and has a multiple personality. One of the many voices inside his head is called 'Billy'; and while Duncan quite enjoyed *Jetfighter 3*, Billy wasn't so sure. Here's the tale...





(Left) Even Billy liked the sun and cloud effects.

(Right) Planespotter alert, planespotter alert. Lots of boring/interesting* (*delete as applicable) information about, er, aeroplanes.



nice if it was, um, '*Doomy*' or something, but I don't think it really, er...

Billy: Right, so you wanted to walk into your cabin and have your wingman take a swing at you for shooting him down on the previous mission. Yes or no?

Me: Errrr... well...

Billy: And you also thought it'd be nice if there was some simulated 'totty'. A strip poker game in the mess, with a lass. Did you or did you not? Tits and so on?

Me: Shut up, shut up, you're embarrassing me...

The flying bits....

Billy: Tell them about the resolution. If you don't, I will.

Me: Erm, well, *JF3* is pretty processor-hungry (for good reason) and while there are several hi-res viewing modes on offer, I was forced into the standard 320x200. But then I'm fussy about screen update speeds...

Billy: Oh yeah? And you think nobody else is? And you also failed to point out you were using a P133. And how about the badly spelt mission descriptions? This for instance: *"UN Agents report a drug processing plant located in the jungle just east of Punta Gorda. It processes cocaine from raw Columbian cocoa leaves."* So, 60 quid for a gram of chocolate then.

Me: *(Seethe).* You think you're so-o-o-o clever, don't you?

Billy: Well, I'm cleverer than you, turd brain.

Turd brain gets stroppy...

Me: Okay, I've had it! Go on, you finish the review.

Billy: I thought you'd never ask, pico-nads. Right. Flight sims have been the same for years and years and years, pretty much. And *JF3* is no exception when it comes down to the mission structure – we've all seen it and played it a thousand times before. We're in 1997, after all. This having been said, however, the strength of *JF3* comes not so much in its numerous campaigns and quickstart missions, but in the shape of its graphics engine and geographic database. What you get on the CD, you see, is accurately mapped terrain detail for most of South America. Yes... accurately mapped... most of South America. Three and a half million square miles of stuff to fly upside-down over, at a height of nine feet, with virtually no pause for accessing (as long as you've installed SMARTDRIVE). And data disks are, apparently, to ensue – with an unspoken promise that the entire world will be available sooner rather than later.

Hey! How about that? Planet Earth.

And – if the game designers get their act together and next time actually try to do something novel and inventive with the code at their disposal – who knows: we might be finally able to kiss goodbye to Microsoft's no guns *Flight Sim* series.

But what about now?



Me: Well, you made out like I was a prat, yet your snoozy pontifications still didn't manage to reach any solid conclusions. You didn't even say whether or not *JF3* is worth buying.

Billy: I'll sort that out now. *JF3* pisses on *F-22* (reviewed a couple of months back) and *that* scored 90%. The padlock view is brilliant, the SAMs, flak and so forth are for the most part visually splendid, the enemy pilots' AI is cool, and on and on and on and on. Unfortunately, there's often so much shit going down around your plane that it feels like you're in one of those 'Independence Day' mega scenes, which is a problem. The game's too hard, basically, and the pacing is wrong – which could easily prevent you from getting 'involved'. Still, you can always select Free Flight, and go 'city buzzing', following the leccy pylons from one population centre to another (before soaring to 40,000 feet where you can see the curvature of the Earth). Oh, and I just forgot to mention that there's an FA/18 Hornet to fly, as well as the F-22 – and there's one of those giant anoraky on-line reference libraries, too (which contains some pretty neat photos, as it happens). Yeah, *Jetfighter 3*'s great as it stands (given a fair deal of *déjà vu*), but it could be totally unbelievable eventually... I've got zillions of ideas of things they could add.

Me: Like what?

Billy: Hah! You think I'd tell *you*???

Me: Yes! Go on, tell me! And if you don't I really will drill into my skull and finish you off for good!

Billy: You're bluffing again.

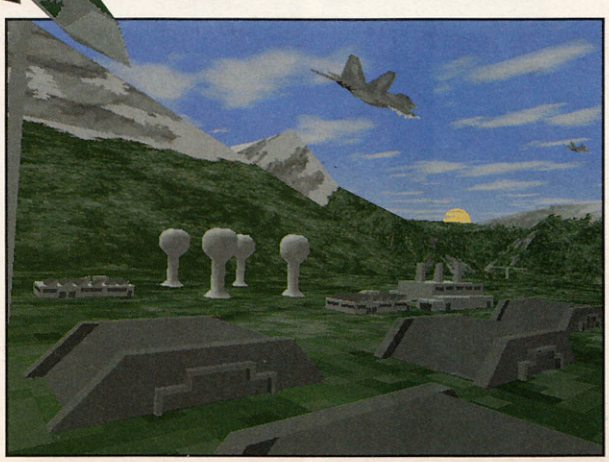
Me: Wanna bet? Suck on this!!!

Billy: Yaaaaarrrgh!!!!

Me: Yaaaaaaaaarrrgghh!!! Z



(Below) Fly over the world and witness the invasion of the giant joysticks.



Tech specs

Memory: 8Mb minimum

Processor: P100 or better

Graphics: VGA/SVGA

Sound: All major sound cards

Controls: Joystick (including poncey ones with a million buttons)

Score

91

An enjoyable enough flight sim which – due to being 'future-proofed' – could one day lift itself by its own bootstraps and transform itself into something completely astounding.

Price: £39.99 **Release Date:** Out now
Publisher: EIDOS Interactive
Tel: 0181 780 2222

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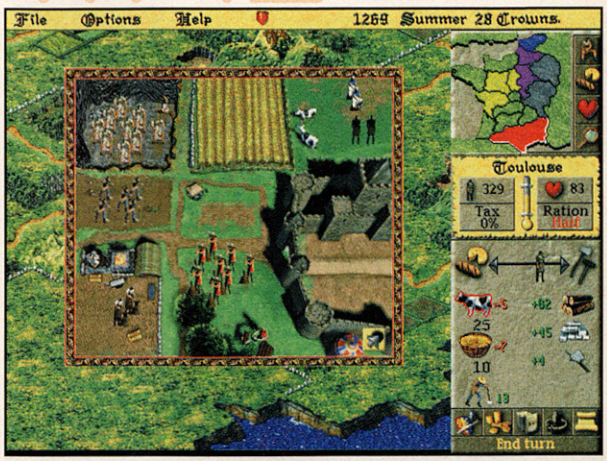
SOME ITEMS MAY NOT BE RELEASED AT TIME OF GOING TO PRESS.

Lords Of The Realm 2

"Could we please stop instantly dismissing Impressions games now?" asks Paul Presley to a disinterested office. "Go away, you strategy-loving mutant freakazoid," we reply kindly.







For many an aeon I've been like a lone voice of sanity regarding Impressions games. An oasis of rationality in a vast desert of prejudice. A lone pubic hair of intelligence... (*Enough – Ed.*). Very well.

The common reaction when one of the much-maligned developers' titles makes its way onto the desk of an editorial bod is to shriek in horror and then hit it several times with a large sledgehammer. Then to farm it out either to myself or Andrew Wright or shove it into the Pick 'N' Mix section.

Well, enough is enough! I say thee, nay! Impressions deserve to be heard! As witnesses for the defence I call games like *Breach 2*, *Rules Of Engagement* (and the sequel), *Ultimate Soccer Manager 2*, the *Interlocking Game System* – one of the boldest and most unique ideas since the BBC decided to give Noel Edmonds his own prime time TV programme – and finally, ladies and gentlemen of the jury, *Lords Of The Realm 2*. All shining examples of quality strategy gaming joy.

Okay, not everything bearing the Impressions haircut is good, or even slightly okay. They've had more than their fair share of honest, god-fearing crap. But the key thing to remember is that when they're good, they're usually pretty good indeed.

Delusions of grandeur

Lords Of The Realm 2 continues this trend of Impressions reputation revivalism by being a very smart historically-based resource-management game. Players of the first game will both be very old and very pleased to hear that it retains its surprisingly playable nature, but generally enhances every area to make it able to stand up to the other big-name resource-management games on the shelves today.

It's almost as if Impressions' recent merger with Sierra has given the company a real boost, both in terms of game design and presentation quality. Even the really playable Impressions game of old (namely, *Rules Of Engagement*) suffered from being mired in the then traditional world of poor quality graphics, sound and control systems. Nowadays it's a different story.

LOTR2 is both engaging and attractive to play. The aim is the same as every resource-manager – take over land, strip it for goods, raise a healthy populace, make lots of money, form an army, take over more land, repeat till fade. But *LOTR2* approaches these tasks with plenty of fresh-faced appeal and sets them in an era that hasn't really garnered much exposure (*Civilization* dealt with early medievalism as well, but only in passing).

Curate's egg and chips

There are areas that *could* be improved. The combat sections could be easier and allow for more strategic control. They have the air of a feature that was added after everything else to provide a nice 'bonus' (there's an option to let the computer calculate the battles). Each area of land has only a limited number of resource-producing fields available that really needed to be expanded as time went on. Lots of little things.

But generally, *LOTR2* is a good, playable, well thought out game.



(Above far left) That's a funny looking cleavage.

(Above left) That's a funny looking inner thigh...

(Above) And that's... (*Enough – Ed.*)

(Left) Re-arrange these soldiers to form your favourite word – like 'mammary' (*I warned you – Ed.*)

Hopefully, a few more titles like this and Impressions will have garnered some much needed respect within the UK gaming community. And hopefully this will lead to *Rules Of Engagement 3*, *Breach 4* and lots more lovely IGS titles. Yum, can't wait. Z

Tech specs

Memory: 8Mb
Processor: 486DX/66
Graphics: SVGA
Sound: All major sound cards
Controls: Mouse
Note: Windows 95 required

Score

80

Impressions come up trumps (again).

Price: £44.99 **Release Date:** Out now
Publisher: Sierra/Impressions
Tel: 01189 209100

dan Personal Computers The People's Choice

Realms of the Haunting

Paul Mallinson canan can't tttyeriuy type hhd hhh his *Realms o o of the Haunnnting* intro prpop properly bbbbecause he he he's ss s still sss sshaking wiiht with ffffright...

PC ZONE CLASSIC





CRIKEY – WHERE DO I START? *Realms of the Haunting* is such a scary, scary game. I'm ashamed to admit it. Me – the big, 'hard' Northerner who eats and breathes horror films and is never afraid to walk down a dark alley at night, or get on the last bus home surrounded by an army of drunken bigots – frightened by a 'poxy' computer game? S'true. (*Yup, that's what it says on his CV – Ed.*)

As a horror story, *Realms of the Haunting* would not look out of place in a David Cronenberg filmography. It's a mean, spirited tale of trapped souls, black magic and bloodthirsty monsters that unfolds using an intelligent and innovative mix of video, role-playing, conversational interaction and all-out first-person blasting action.

(Above) Right, who's first for a new arsehole?

(Above right) Two hours of video footage break the pace of the game, even though the game would be just as good without it.

Hell on Earth

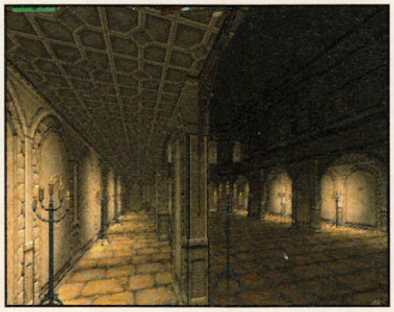
The story opens with main character dude Adam Randall on a journey to the Cornish village of Helston to investigate the recent death of his priest father. Terrible visions plague him en route and, even worse, upon arriving at his late father's house the appearance of a ghostly apparition opens up a whole rotting can of worms, triggering supernatural activity all over the shop. Adam's father, it seems, was up to more than the odd church Mass.

The house is peppered with locked doors initially. Mysterious symbols daubed in what looks like glowing green blood prevent them from being opened. There's a gun, some written clues and a few flickering candles to start off with. Not much you may think, until a hidden passage is found leading to the sprawling catacombs below... then the game really begins to hot up.



(Left) The mysterious multi-precipiced Tower opens doors to other worlds.

(Right) The landscapes throughout the game are incredibly detailed and vary tremendously.



Time to die...

Taking over where the FMV leaves off, your first encounter with the headless, sword-wielding beasts that scream like buggery when they emerge from the floor is a pant-cacking experience not at all helped by the incredibly atmospheric lighting of the glowing lava pools and flickering candelabras. A few well-aimed shots are all that are needed to despatch these nasty basts, although the shotgun found later on is far handier at taking out any of the 25 different monsters that you encounter trying to eat you throughout the game.

Now, the first thing to say here is that *Realms* isn't *Quake*. It never set out to be and doesn't even live in the same genre, if truth be known. There is a lot of

Always turn the light on!

Both Chris [Dep Ed] and I have been playing *Realms* solidly for over a week now, and we've learnt that it certainly pays to find the light switch before exploring a darkened room. It's sort of reassuring in a 'there's something moving in there and I'd really like to see what it is before it chews my arm off' kind of way.



Light off. Eeek!



Light on. Phew!





In Perspective

Although *Realms* is definitely *the* adventure of the moment, we have played better. *Ultima Underworld II* has real depth and is far more interactive, especially conversation between yourself and NPCs, which *Realms* sometimes lacks. *System Shock* still rules, and *Azrael's Tear*, although very similar to *Realms*, misses out because ultimately it's a bit boring.

Realms of the Haunting

System Shock

Azrael's Tear

Ultima Underworld II

shooting, admittedly, and the first-person polygon environment is pretty sound, but the emphasis here is on the story and puzzle-solving. *Realms* is reminiscent of past RPGs such as *Stone Prophet* and the *Ultima Underworld* series, even though the mechanics of the game are much simplified and dispense with such trivialities as THACOs (convoluted AD&D combat point system) and all the usual dice-rolling crap associated with games of this sort. There's a detailed inventory, a hyper-intelligent cursor that indicates whether things can be used or looked at, and an energy bar that does the usual business. The controls work well (keyboard for movement and mouse for interaction) and don't obstruct progress, which is what we want at the end of the day, isn't it?

Female interest

Split into chapters, *Realms of the Haunting* eases the player into Adam's boots gradually, taking great care not to make things too difficult too early on. Every time something significant happens an impressive piece of video takes over, fleshing out the plot, offering vital clues (don't take your eyes off any of it for a moment!), sometimes even branching off in different directions depending on your reaction to a particular situation.

A female sidekick gets involved quite early on, which makes for surprisingly lively banter as almost everything in the game can be discussed between them. This proves extremely useful as you learn that Rebecca (for that is what she is called) is blessed with psychic powers and an understanding of the occult. And she doesn't just stand there screaming when the monsters attack, which is a blessed relief.

Best for years

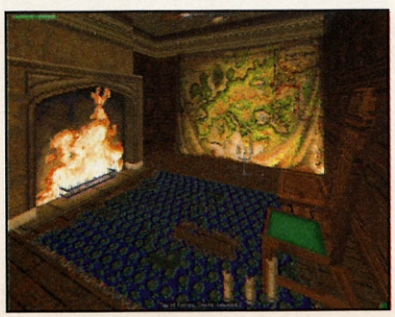
Realms' strengths lie in the fact that all the gaming elements mix together so well, and that the game is bloody massive and a real challenge to play through. Attention to detail levels are set to maximum and almost everything you find lying around can be looked at for clues or picked up to use. There are even light switches on the walls, which you'll learn to use straightaway upon entering a darkened room – believe you me! The architecture throughout the house and in the different realms is fantastic, astoundingly intricate and well textured. It *is* a pity that the rigidly angular nature of the graphics makes things look a little flat at times, but certainly don't let that put you off playing the game.

As I mentioned earlier, it's a scary experience. The sound effects have a lot to do with this – insane laughter, crying babies, hollering beasts and creaking floors add so much to the game you'll be jumping out of your skin, like I was, every time you hear something out of the ordinary.

Realms of the Haunting is Gremlin's best game for years. It's an epic. It's a completely absorbing experience from start to finish, and it really, really deserves your attention. Z







Chris's opinion

There are many ways in which you can measure how addicted you are to a game. The most obvious is by calculating how much time you've spent playing it. I spent most of my week off playing *Realms of the Haunting* (yes, I know how sad that sounds, shut up, okay?) and I only stopped because the gold disc wouldn't work in my CD drive anymore. So as you've probably guessed, I was rather taken with it. Firstly, because the graphics are breathtakingly beautiful. Secondly, because all the different game elements complement each other perfectly. But mostly, because it's just so damned playable. There's always something to do, somewhere to go, someone to meet, puzzles to solve, things to get scared off (as Paul points out in his review) and tons more stuff going on besides. I don't really have anymore to add to what Paul has already said (except to say I agree with all his comments) other than to urge you to go out and buy this game as soon as it arrives in your friendly neighbourhood software store. (*They're not American – Ed.*) Shut up!

(Above far left) Knife-wielding skeletons rise from their graves! And, yes, the 'weapon' at the bottom of the screen does look rather suspect.

(Above left) Need to get one more of these golden statuettes and I'll finally be able to open this sarcophagus. Who knows what lies beyond...

(Below left) Check out the fire effect. You've got to see it moving, of course. It's... it's... it's alright, actually.

(Below) I'm going to play *Realms of the Haunting* all the way through to the end, and then I'm going to sit here sulking – arms crossed – until *Realms II* comes out!

Tech specs

Memory: 8Mb

Processor: 486DX 66MHz

Graphics: VGA, SVGA

Sound: All major sound cards

Controls: Mouse, keyboard

Score

93

The best adventure I've had the pleasure of playing in a long, long time.

Price: £44.99 **Release Date:** Out now
Publisher: Gremlin Interactive
Tel: 0114 753423

dan Personal Computers The People's Choice

NBA Live 97



(Above) The annual NBA disco-dancing competition. The man in the white on the left of the screen was subsequently banned for life.

(Above right) The Chicago Bulls intimidate opponents by never cleaning the floor of their court.

To commemorate Patrick McCarthy's 1,000th career basketball game intro, he typed this one naked. And no-hands. Fair turns your stomach, doesn't it? Don't drop the mag!... too late.

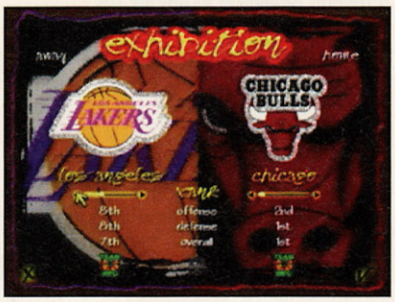
Everyone knows short people are aggressive: Hitler, Napoleon, Attila the Hun, Dennis Wise... all stroppy little bastards with half an eye on world domination and the other on anyone taller than them.



Everyone also knows that tall people are laid back and relaxed about life. (Mainly because most of it is bemusingly going on below them and they can't follow it.) Basketball is played by preternaturally tall people, and despite all the netball jibes, it's an extremely tiring and very physical game. Watch the average game of basketball and you'll see pushing and shoving, foul and abusive language, and every now and then, a really spectacular punch-up. And that's with tall people taking part. Now you know why they won't let short-arses play.

This year's model

Presumably EA is run by short people, because they seem to have a whole eye on world domination. Every year for as far back as anyone can remember (which isn't that far, what with the drink, drugs and MTV culture), they've been churning out new versions of their sports games to try to sucker the mugs into buying yet more of their wares, regardless of whether they have anything new to present or not. Last year's version of *NBA* was a case in point: alright, so it had EA's Virtual Stadium™ technology, but it looked a lot less sparkly and interesting than the previous year's effort – and it got a lower score for this very reason. But this year, they've gone and cracked it: this one is a minor gem (an opal, or a highly-polished marrowfat pea, or something). Just like *FIFA*, they seem to have got their act together,





(Right) Our NBA disco dancers search frantically for their handbags.

Playing God

This might be less useful for anyone from outside the USA, because you tend to find that most people 'support' whoever the latest champions are and/or whatever team's gear they can buy in the sports shop (which is usually the same thing). But if you do happen to support one of the lesser lights, (like the Noo Yawk Fucken Nets, as I believe they're known), and you're unhappy with the under-achievers you're lumbered with, but don't want to nick all the best real-life players from other teams using the Trade options, you can use the New Player option to create a star from scratch. (It's a bit like being Janet Street-Porter, except you don't have to shag them.)

They can be as mundane or superhuman as you like (although the former is probably a bit of a waste of time). Or they could be you. You can't specify what type of car you drive and which top actress you're currently sleeping with, so your mates won't be impressed. But you can pretend.







thought about the game a bit more, and added enough stuff so that even if you've got the original, it's still a worthwhile buy.

There is all the usual options stuff: three levels of difficulty, exhibition, season play or play-off games, Internet, network and serial cable support. There's arcade or simulation mode, or you can customise it yourself, deciding what rules you'll play to and what you'll ignore (basic arcade level doesn't even have out-of-bounds switched on). And you can select 3, 5, 8 or 12-minute quarters.

Bigger, better, brighter

The difference between this game and last year's is that the latter seemed like a tired attempt to stick *NBA* into a Virtual Stadium™ regardless, whereas this time round the fact that it's got the vs treatment is beside the point. It certainly looks a lot better: last year the colours were murky, things got very confused around the basket, and the whole thing seemed rather lacklustre. This year, it's brighter and clearer, the players are bigger. And it plays a lot better as a result.

Throughout the game the presentation, from the music and screen layouts, to the in-game stuff itself, is outstanding – plays called are shown on screen; you can see player names as you play; icons are clear and well-designed, but if you wait a second you're told what they mean anyway (all games should do this as a matter of course). Selecting the camera angle you want is easier than getting Dennis Rodman into a dress, thanks to the simple fact that all the angles are demonstrated for you in little thumbnails. Nothing's more tiresome than exiting to the options screen, trying out a camera angle, re-starting the game and finding that you don't like it, and repeating the procedure all over again. Well alright, waiting in casualty on a Saturday night is. And watching 'Casualty' on a Saturday night is, too. And quite a lot of other things. But you know what I mean, and this avoids it.

The whole thing is a very good package, put together better than any sports game on the PC at the moment. If you like basketball, you'll love this. Even if you're only mildly interested in basketball but want a decent two-player sports game, you'll love it as well. The one thing you have to bear in mind if you're thinking of buying it is the tech specs. If you can better these, and you like basketball, snap it up. You can even dance to it. **Z**

Tech specs

Memory: 16Mb

Processor: P75 (P133 recommended)

Graphics: SVGA

Sound: All major sound cards

Controls: Keyboard, joystick, gamepad, Gravis Grip, mouse

Note: Win 95 required

Stats central

Stats Central is where you go if looking at columns of numbers gets you hotter and sweatier than Bernard Manning doing push-ups in a sauna in a wet-suit. Er… that's as in him physically doing it, not you thinking about him doing it getting all horny… never mind.

Again, it's beautifully presented, using two USA maps (East and West) showing exactly where each team in either Conference lives. (It helps that basketball is the only known American sport in which the geographical names of the Conferences actually make sense in real life.) You can check out everything about a team or player, from points-per-game and re-bounding averages, to amount of human growth hormone consumed as an infant. It's so good, and so extensive, they could probably sell this as a multimedia guide to the NBA in its own right. But don't tell them that, or they probably will.

(Above far left) Mitch Richmond: the only NBA player to have a basketball for a left arm.

(Below right) One of the entertaining things about basketball is the colourful nicknames… ah.







(Below) Now can you guess which two players in this shot are having an affair?



Score

92

One of the best sports games on the PC.

Price: £39.99 **Release Date:** Out now
Publisher: Electronic Arts
Tel: 01753 549 442

dan Personal Computers The People's Choice

PC ZONE RECOMMENDED

Sim Copter







Duncan MacDonald once closed his eyes, extended his arms, and span around on the spot for three minutes before falling into a hedge. This makes him our resident helicopter expert...

(Above) Green rotors? Have you *ever* seen a real chopper with green rotors outside Ridley Road Market?

(Above right) Blimey, green-rotored chopper collides in mid-air with grey flying saucer and gives birth to... a blue-bodied baby. Wahay!

(Below) And now, green-bodied chopper gets stalked by a swarm of African killer bees. Does that make it a Seasting helicopter (this pun is for chopper pedants only)?

First things first: the graphics in *Sim Copter* are shite (and, ironically, processor-hungry at the same time). Playing the game on a P133 I had to drop all textures in order to extend the 'distance fogging' to an acceptable level. And, once this had been done, what was left looked not unlike the Atari ST version of *Midwinter* (remember that?). Mind you, I don't know quite why I'm going to such lengths to explain this, seeing as all you have to do is look at the screenshots. Crap, aren't they? So, as said, the graphics are shite. But guess what? The game underneath shines through like a shaft of gold.

A shaft of gold?

Yes, a shaft of gold. Or silver, at least. I'll tell you what I'm getting increasingly sick of and that's military simulators: take an aircraft, go on missions, shoot missiles, get medals, repeat until braindead (*and then join the British Army, ba-boom – Ed.*). Ye gods! How many times are we going to be expected to swallow the same tired pill? If you're anything like me you'll already be fully *au fait* with target acquisition and launch procedures of over 50 different types of ordnance, in both VGA and SVGA.

But how about trying to answer a distress call in which you have to hover gingerly, in gusting winds, between two swaying skyscrapers, before lowering a safety harness to a panic-stricken 'punter'? Or locating and shadowing a fleeing villain, keeping your spotlight on him till the filth show up? What about putting out a fire, tooled up with little more than a glorified bucket of water? Or chasing a speeding car? And so on? Well, sound the fanfares for these are *exactly* the sorts of things you find yourself doing in *Sim Copter*. Oh, and the sound and music are cool too. But there's more...

There's more...

Yes, more. *Sim Copter* comes with what amounts to 24 city scenarios encompassing eight levels of difficulty, and in all of these you earn dosh for successful missions and are therefore able to 'upgrade'... faster, bigger choppers, tear gas launcher etc. But *Sim Copter*'s Unique Selling Point has to be the fact that it's entirely compatible with *Sim City 2000*. Design a city in *SC2000*, save the map, load it into *Sim Copter*, and *voilà* – it's exactly as before, but in 3D. You can land on the buildings and whatnot.

"Why would I want to do that?" you might be asking. Um, well, maybe you wouldn't. But that's always the way with Maxis stuff, isn't it? It all depends on how 'regimented' you are, whether or not you're happy to just kind of 'muck about' for the hell of it. All I can add is that – shonky graphics aside – I'm finding *Sim Copter* as addictive as any of the 'classic' Maxis titles, and seeing as I haven't yet located my old copy of *SC2000* (the flat's a complete mess), there's still thrice the fun to come, once I do.



And finally...

The helicopter flight models. You're probably assuming they're really crap, sort of easy-peasy, especially designed for girly cry-babies. Well, they're not. We're not talking hyper-intense realism by any stretch of the imagination, but you'll certainly be needing a fair bit of manual dexterity (and a joystick) to get past level four. What a breath of fresh air. Z

Tech specs

Memory: 16Mb
Processor: Pentium 100+
Graphics: VGA/SVGA
Sound: SoundBlaster & compatibles
Controls: Keys, mouse

Score

85

Get your head around the shitehouse graphics and you have yourself a groovy game!

Price: £39.99 **Release Date:** Out now
Publisher: Maxis
Tel: 0171 505 1500

dan Personal Computers The People's Choice

Heroes Of Might And Magic II



Not particularly mighty, hardly the most heroic of souls and about as magical as Debbie McGee, who better to review *Heroes* than Paul Presley?

CIVILIZATION HAS A LOT TO ANSWER for (the game that is – regular civilisation has enough troubles of its own). The world of top-down, gradually expanding exploration games was never the same after the man Meier got his hands on it. Still, it's seen good times and bad. For every *Blood & Magic* there was a *Command & Conquer*, so I suppose it's all balanced out. And now, hoping to tip the scales in favour of goodness, comes *Heroes Of Might And Magic II* – and jolly good it is too.

Jolly?

Well, all right. Not jolly. Try engagingly good. Starting with a small town, you have to recruit powerful warriors to raise armies and explore the world at large, looking for treasure, resources and adventures. Despite these attributes, it isn't an RPG but more a resource management game, only with the emphasis on exploration.

It works surprisingly well because there's so much to be found while exploring. You can engage in the storyline if you want (a tale of good brother versus bad brother), but mainly the fun is to be had by stopping off at each new place you discover – that and the fact that there are so many different types of characters to play around with. Each town has various types of creatures to recruit, and since each town can be expanded to provide you with more options, *Heroes* becomes a game with definite long-term appeal.

Sauce for the goose, arsenic for the gander

However, one air bubble of opposition in the overall wallpaper of mass approval is that *Heroes* is very firmly rooted in the fantasy *Dungeons & Dragons* arena, and it's this that tends to limit its appeal. Games like *Civilization* (which, to be honest, is its closest rival), while being similar in style, do seem to have a more global attraction to them. Because of the very fantasy-quest-based nature of the game, *Heroes* is going to struggle slightly to reach a large audience.

This is a pity really, because apart from that (and a combat system that is perhaps a bit too basic), I thoroughly enjoyed *Heroes*. It strikes a perfect balance between resource management and world exploration, and thanks to the custom game options and the multi-player networking facilities, it has enough variety to see it lasting long after the campaign storyline has run out of steam – even if the main protagonists do boast a pair of stunningly amusing moustaches. **Z**

PC ZONE RECOMMENDED



(Right) Despite the rather demonic look about this woman and her cronies, she's actually a hero(ine).

(Left) Heroes can be used to guard your towns, but they're far more useful out gathering treasures.

(Below) With a world as packed as this, you're not likely to get bored in a hurry.



Tech specs

Memory: 8Mb
Processor: 486DX2/66
Graphics: SVGA
Sound: All major soundcards
Controls: Mouse, keyboard

Score

87

A highly enjoyable fantasy-based *Civilization* game.

Price: £44.99 **Release Date:** Out now
Publisher: The 3DO Company
Tel: 0181 296 1949
Web: http://www.3do.com

dan Personal Computers The People's Choice

And the winner is...

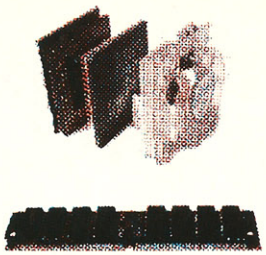
One of my favourite hobbies is trying my CD-ROM games out on a regular CD player to see if it holds any audio secrets (well, it's better than stamp collecting). More often than not all I get is either silence or the sharp, unmelodic hiss of raw data desperately searching for an operating system upon which to proffer itself. Occasionally though, I find that the programmers have recorded the game's musical score as plain CD audio and that I've gotten myself a free mini-albumette to add to my carefully labelled collection.

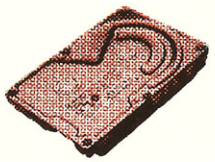
Imagine my surprise to find that the *Heroes* disc had no fewer than 43 separate tracks to listen to! Yes! 43! But that's not all – these are normally pretty simple affairs. Not so here. While prodding my sharp reviewer's stick through the game's options I'd noticed that the Music Options gave me the choice of Off, Midi, CD or CD with Opera! Opera. That last bastion of hope for a fat person's career in the arts.

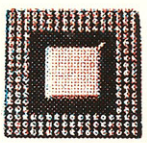
If there were such a thing as computer game Oscars, the award for best soundtrack would go to Rob King, Steve Baca and Paul Romero – the musicians for *Heroes* who have produced what is quite simply the most stunning music I've heard in any game all year. The runners-up would have been *Archimedean Dynasty* and the opening theme from *Captain Quazar*. But since there aren't any such awards, they'll have to make do with my meaningless praise. Cold comfort I know, but it's better than nothing.

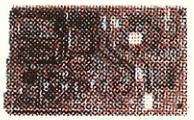
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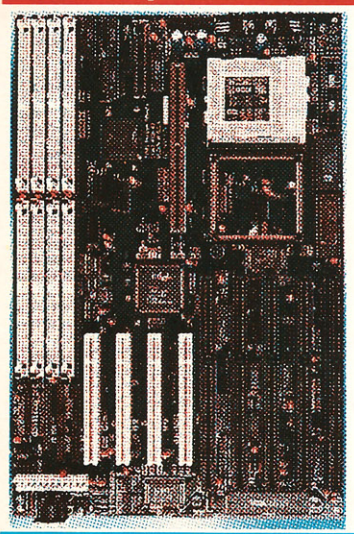








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Issue 23 - September 96.

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PICK N MIX

You know that scary Keith bloke out of the Prodigy? Well, Charlie Brooker's got a strikingly similar haircut and demeanour. He lives at the bottom of an old mossy well, lurking in the darkness with his eyes flashing wildly this way and that. His teeth fell out three years ago, and he spends most of his time bashing an old bit of wood against the wall, screaming wild nonsense. But once a month, we gingerly peer into the shaft and lower down a sack stuffed full of PC games. And he writes a report in charcoal on the side of a battered 'For Sale' sign, and winches it back to the surface. Here's what he scrawled this time round...

JAGGED ALLIANCE II: DEADLY GAMES



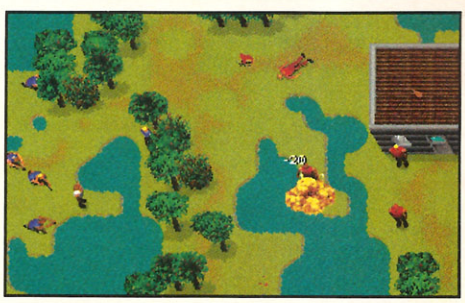
Another family picnic ends in chaos.

BLOODY GOOD FUN, THIS. HAVING NEVER played *Jagged Alliance* numero uno, I wasn't sure quite what to expect – although my customary glance at the cover suggested an ultra-dull hex-hopping wargame. But no, it's something far more appealing: a combat game which manages to be genuinely nail-biting and laugh-out-loud funny at the same time. Basically you take command of a crack (or is that cack?) team of mercenaries (70 different ones to choose from, from disgruntled psychotic postal workers to out-of-work cartoon voiceover actors – no, really) and lead them through a series of top-down view skirmishes. The range of weapons is both impressive and bizarre (rocks and hedge trimmers get a look in). If that isn't enough, there's also an 'editing' mode which allows you to tinker about with existing missions or conjure up entirely new ones. And they've bunged in a second CD for free, so you can link up and play against a mate. Okay, okay, it's got antiquated VGA graphics, and it's turn-based (*à la X-Com*), but don't let either of those factors put you off, 'cos I say it rules. And I'm the boss around here. (*Oh, is that so? – Ed.*)

Publisher: SirTech/VIE
Tel: 0171 368 2255
Price: £34.99
Internet: terri@bbs.tsf.com

SCORE: 79%





THE LOST FILES OF SHERLOCK HOLMES: CASE OF THE ROSE TATTOO

IT'S NOT OFTEN YOU FIND A GAME WITH ABSTRACT, surrealist statements printed on its back cover, but this one does. "The Game's A Foot," it says, right there on the box. They're trying to mess with our minds, I tells ya. Anyway, *Rose Tattoo* is related to the original *Sherlock* game that EA released ages back (and is not to be confused with the more recent FMV disaster), and covers roughly the same ground. It's a fairly efficient, reasonably involving, point'n'click adventure that never does anything particularly special, but that doesn't mean it isn't fun. The graphics have changed since the days of its forerunner; the drawn sprites have been replaced by awkwardly digitised actors, to unintentionally comic effect (Watson walks like he's just laid a turd in his breeches, Holmes often appears to be doing the hand-jive). Still, if you're a fan of Conan Doyle and you aren't totally averse to the odd bit of Sunday afternoon gameplay, you could do far worse. In other words, it's the kind of thing which would appeal to your elderly uncle who's just bought a PC.



Cor blimey, strike a light guv'nor. Etc.



I say, Holmes, it's your round. Yer wankaaah, yer.

Publisher: Electronic Arts
Tel: 01753 549442
Price: £39.99
Internet: www.ea.com

SCORE: 70%

»

WIZARDRY: NEMESIS



Some *Wizardry* things and stuff, innit. Like. Sorta.

JUST WHAT THE WORLD'S BEEN WAITING FOR: A brand spanking new chapter in the ongoing epic of gaming excellence that is the *Wizardry* series. And alongside *Wizardry Gold*, it looks amazing. The key phrase in that sentence is 'looks', incidentally, since it fails to be much more interesting than its soporific predecessor. It's basically a blend of *Myst*-esque 'beautiful scenery' and traditional role-playing; it should appeal mainly to those who don't get out much. In case you aren't already bored with rendered, animated FMV sequences, SirTech have helpfully strewn several billion throughout the game (the result of which is that it spans five whole CDs which could have been gainfully employed elsewhere). Still, I've seen worse (*Wizardry Gold* springs to mind), and those with





Welcome to Norwich City Centre.

money to burn and an insatiable urge to quest might find a nugget of interest somewhere amongst the extraneous gloss. One for diehard RPG fans only.

Publisher: SirTech/VIE
Tel: 0171 368 2255
Price: £34.99
Internet: terri@bbs.tsf.com

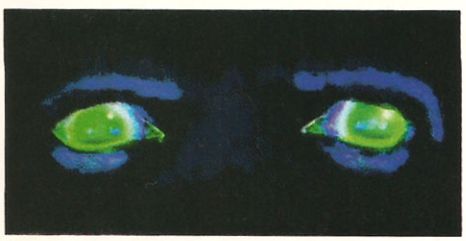
SCORE: 65%

ATMOSFEAR

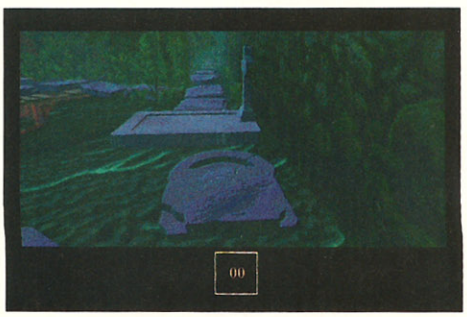
(Right) I love a party with a happy *Atmosfear*...

THE POPULAR BOARD GAME (YOU KNOW, THE ONE with the video and everything) makes it onto the PC. Surveying the accompanying packaging, I noticed the phrase "a truly revolutionary multi-player system". Since you merely take it in turns to have a go, I couldn't quite work out what they meant – until eventually it dawned on me that turns are taken in a clockwise direction. Truly revolutionary indeed. Since this is a 'horror' game, a lot depends upon its ability to create a tense, threatening atmosphere, and to a certain extent it succeeds. Mind you, much is made of the supposed 'scariness' of the host, whereas I found his incessant pantomime malevolence (not to mention his constant half-cocked insults) downright annoying. Make it to the end of the game and there's the opportunity to find yourself coming face to face with your greatest fear (although try as I might, I couldn't spot Eamonn Holmes anywhere).

Anyway, if you really want to sit around with some friends, playing a board game on your PC, instead of on your living room floor (which is where this kind of thing works best), then go ahead, be my guest.



Ma, he's making radioactive eyes at me.

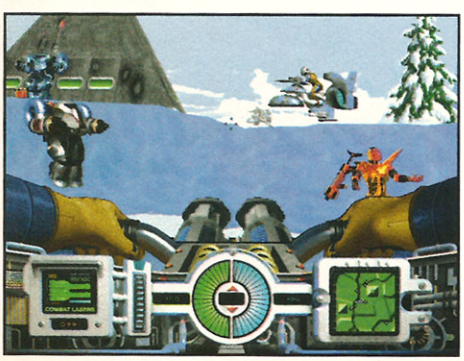


It's not the sort of game you'll play a lot, but it's still fun played in a group.

Publisher: EMG Entertainment
Tel: 01273 728686
Price: £29.95
Internet: www.emg_ent.com

SCORE: 65%

ASHES TO ASHES

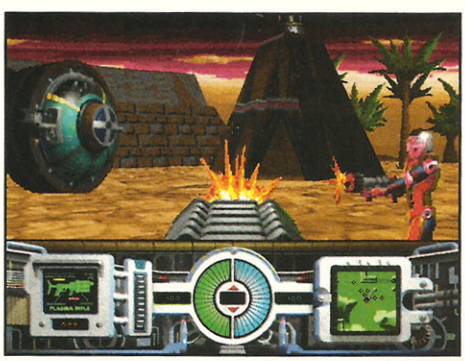


I'll find the development team if it kills me. Or them...

OR 'ASHES TO ASHAYYYYSSSS!!!!', AS THE in-game theme song would have it (yes, it's got its own song, and bloody terrible it is too – the sort of big-haired power pop-rock that used to poison the airwaves throughout the mid-80s, until the United Nations voted to ban its production and/or use).

It's a particularly sorry-arsed *Doom*/*Quake*-style shoot 'em up which makes the least of a not-bad 3D engine to produce a very poor game indeed. The idea is this: you enter a kind of outdoor arena, flail around for a bit, shoot a few enemies (who seem to start running away when you get too close), destroy a set quota of 'evil brains', and then progress to an ostensibly identical level to do it all over again. Occasionally you get to ride around on a little cyberpunk golf cart, presumably for comic relief.

Let me tell you what I really think of this game. If I were a Computer Studies teacher, and a group of remedial eight-year-old children submitted this for their end-of-term project, I'd thrash the fools to within an inch of their tiny lives.



Look at this sorry-arsed *Doom*/*Quake*-style shoot 'em up.

Publisher: Corel
Tel: 01491 873323
Price: £39.99
Internet: www.corel.com

Optimised for Windows 95

SCORE: 25%

DEUS

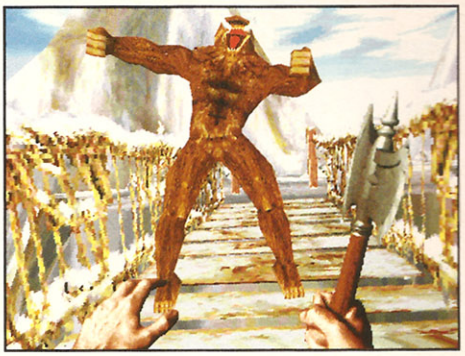


Bollock-bursting action, *Deus* style.

BEING A SEQUEL OF SORTS TO *Robinson's Requiem*, this is a bit of a weird one. One part combat, two parts exploration, three parts survival, all viewed from the trusty old first-person perspective. The controls are unwieldy to the point of infuriation (especially if you try to use the mouse), whilst the visuals range from okay-ish to downright dreadful.

What is interesting, though, is the 'survival' element. Especially if you muck around with it for a laugh – during my first attempt, I tied a torniquet round each of my thighs, then injected disinfectant into my eyes, just to see what would happen (guess what? I died). Quite fascinating in many respects. This makes it fairly unique, if nothing else – but I wouldn't exactly recommend it as a casual purchase.





Publisher: Silmarils
Tel: 0171 917 3864
Price: £TBA

SCORE: 69%

WIZARDRY GOLD

YOU CAN'T JUDGE A GAME BY ITS COVER, BUT you *can* point at it and laugh sarcastically. Which is exactly what I did when I saw the cover of *Wizardry Gold*; a barely-clad, big-titted warrior chick surfing her way towards the viewer atop a shimmering gold *Wizardry* CD. The game is equally banal: what we have here is *Wizardry: Crusaders of the Dark Savant* re-packaged and re-released for Windows 95 geeks. Flick-screen role-playing at its most bearded and dated, in other words. And the wince-inducing accompanying commentary more or less redefines the term "irritating". According to the accompanying bumph, the creation of the *Wizardry* series is an achievement almost on a par with man's conquest of the moon; it goes on to brag that the games have inspired "a movie, a television show, classical and modern music and its own line of books." Modern music? S'yeah, right. Talk about shovelling it with both hands. Well, here's a little song of my own (the lyrics, at any rate; you can make up the tune yourself): "Old, cold, shouldn't be sold – covered in mould, it's *Wizardry Gold*." Okay?





Vivien Westwood has a lot to answer for...

Publisher: SirTech
Tel: 0171 368 2255
Price: £34.99
Internet: terri@bbs.tsf.com

SCORE: 30%

WINDOWS 95

NECRODOME

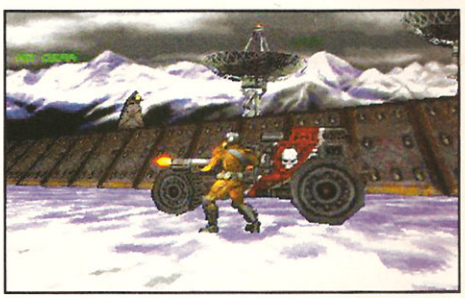


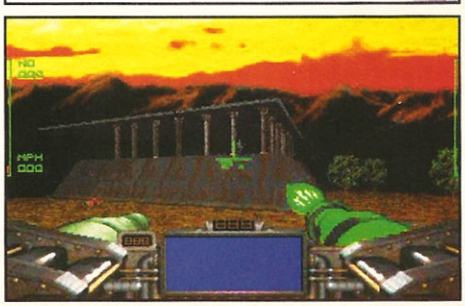
Told you not to buy that '3 for £1' fag lighter.

ONE OF THOSE GAMES THAT PROVOKES LOUD snorts of derision from all who pass by. Welcome to suckville, folks. *Necrodome*'s the name, driving armoured cars around a dull grey arena and shooting at things is the game. Occasionally you get to run around on foot, presumably in search of gameplay. The graphics are so ugly and blocky that the game improves if you close your eyes, and if the Seven Dwarves had been named after the control system, they'd be Sluggish, Awkward, Irritating, Disagreeable, Cumbersome, Bollocks and Shit. Duncan MacDonald saw me playing this and pointed out that if you were a kid, and you'd been saving your pocket money for months just so you could buy this game, then you'd start weeping. So there you go – *Necrodome*, the game that makes innocent little children cry.

Publisher: Mindscape
Tel: 01444 246333
Price: £44.99
Internet: www.FFIonline.com

SCORE: 30%





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Budget Games

(cut here for free badge!)

Squeaks everywhere rejoice. Throw your pennies in the air and squeal in a high-pitched, excited manner. Two new budget lines have been launched, widening still further the number of ways to have fun and save money at the same time. And if you don't like any of these, there's always frottage, says Patrick McCarthy.

Descent



That's you, that is. (Takes you back, eh?)

THIS IS ONE OF THE BETTER budget games around at the moment: the original first-person viewed, *Doom*-like hovery spaceship based shoot 'em up with trickier levels, that go up and down as well as sideways. The levels are more intricate, convoluted and seemingly senseless than the average Lloyd Grossman sentence. It's very spinny. It's incredibly swlrly-abouty. It will have you reacquainted with your last meal before you can say, "Now where did I leave my splash-proof PVC pullover?" You won't know which way is up. You'll get lost just when you least need to (like when you've set off the detonation device at the end of the level and are trying to get out before it blows…). But you'll have an extremely good time doing it. And it's now available on Interplay's new Black Market range for less than the price of an hour in a confessional with a toothless choirboy.

Publisher: Interplay 01628 423 666
Price: £12.99

SCORE: 90%



Flying headlong through the Kandinsky room.

Cyberia



Turn left! Turn left – or was it right? Shit…

CYBERIA WAS ONE OF THE FIRST pre-rendered games to actually have a bit of gameplay in it. This may not seem much to you, but it's the evolutionary equivalent of a fish getting opposable thumbs. Come to think of it, that wouldn't be much good, would it? You know what I mean. Anyway, it presents you with a string of game on rails-style shoot 'em up sections, liberally interspersed with alleged 'adventure' bits. Apart from the odd bit of button-pressing to open doors and stuff, the adventure sections are largely comprised of lengthy segments where you wander about taking decisions about such weighty matters as which way to turn. Get it wrong, and you usually plunge to your death in a pool of boiling acid, or get your nose caught in a food processor, or something. At least you know not to take that option when you re-start (again). But if you can take the repetitive nature of these bits, it's one of the better pre-rendered efforts.

Publisher: Interplay 01628 423 666
Price: £12.99

SCORE: 70%



…He turned right.

Warcraft



If it burns down, get your subjects to repair it.

KNOWN IN THE OFFICE AS 'YES My Lord, My Lord', thanks to the incredibly annoying response you get to your every command from the minions in your charge. It's sort of *Command & Conquery*, only it's set in the days when everyone wore tights: that's right, Christmas panto season. Your task, basically, is to organise your unwashed, half-witted, ill-disciplined rabble and beat the crap out of your neighbours.

The game's a bit like being manager of Arsenal, really – except your men aren't so stupid that they need 'arse' written across their buttocks. Your men aren't that intelligent, though: tell them to chop some trees down next to their house and they catch the next boat to Norway. To be fair, this seems to be pretty much par for the course with all *C&C*-style games. But the levels are large, with plenty of space for expansion, and there's a nicely judged difficulty curve. Not as good as the sequel, but there are a good few hours of play in there.

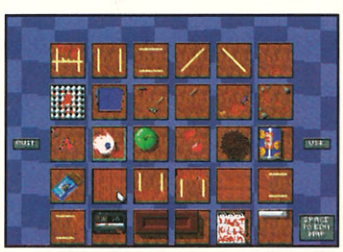
Publisher: Interplay 01628 423 666
Price: £12.99

SCORE: 70%



Some little men wearing big yellow boxes.

Micro Machines 2 Special Edition

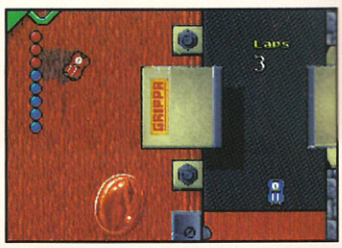


Your simulated box of things to play with.

CODEMASTERS ARE ALSO launching a new budget range, Hot Stuff. They're kicking it all off with this absolute corker: a multi-player, top down-viewed racing game. Use the tiny cars, boats, helicopters and even tanks to skitter around in places like the kitchen, the pool table, or the naked body of your next-door-neighbour's sexy Mum. In fact, thanks to the superb circuit-editing facility, the latter, a popular fantasy with dirty-minded schoolboys everywhere, is now attainable – and for this reason alone, something of a must-buy. But if you're a normal, balanced individual and just want to race around the rim of other people's lavatories, through the detritus on their breakfast table, there are plenty of ready-made circuits.

Publisher: Codemasters 01926 814 132
Price: £12.99

SCORE: 90%

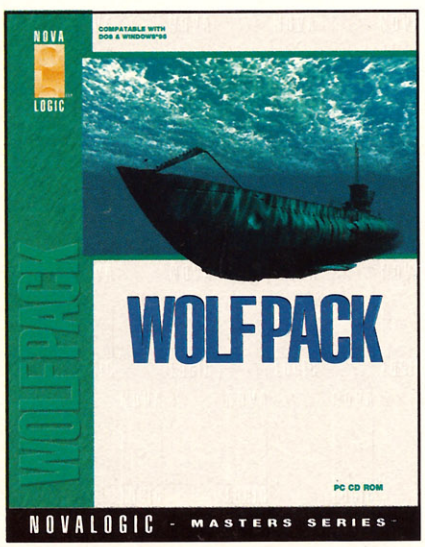


Who dropped her diaphragm there?

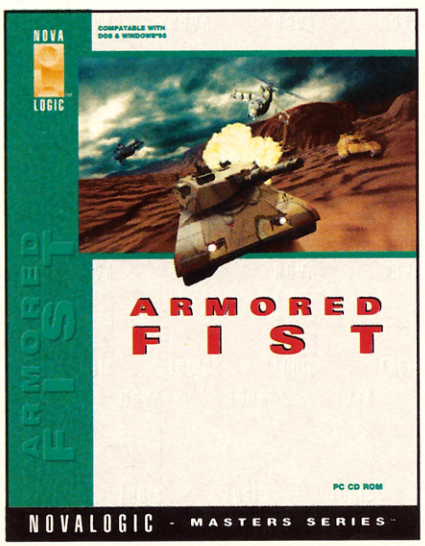


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Are We Being Served?

Registration cards. Everyone has them. Nobody fills them in. Except Patrick McCarthy and his dog, who have nothing better to do with their lives. So what happens if you do? Read on...

IF YOU EVER MANAGE TO BREAK THE cellophane and open the box of a brand new game (using the special 'Impossible Task' tool on your Swiss Army knife), the chances are that about 50 registration cards will fall out, urging you to register the fact that you've purchased the game with the company concerned. The fact that you've already given them their profits isn't enough. "Register your game no-o-o-ow," they urge. "Post me immediately, before you've even put the CD in the drive and found out what you've bou-ou-ought..."

Orange vegetables and small trees

The wording of most registration cards is a fascinating balance, a not-so-sophisticated carrot and stick arrangement. The stick part is their overt implication of guilt – the inference is that if you don't register, you're somehow involved in software piracy (even though you've obviously paid for the bloody thing or you wouldn't be able to read the card and feel guilty). The carrot part is the veiled promise that, if you *do* register, you'll belong to some sort of exclusive club, to which only you and a very few select others can belong. You'll receive advance information about future products; your comments on all the company's products will not only be welcome, but actively sought; you may even be sent a large bag of game-related goodies as a thank you.

Most people put registration cards straight in the bin without a second glance. Some people fold them into origami penises and post them to Mother Teresa – but they're usually more patient types, craftsmen and artisans skilled with their hands. We're firmly of the open-the-box-over-the-bin-and-stand-back school. But just for once, in the public interest, we thought we'd find out what happened if you did send them off to the companies. Who knows, our opinions might be sought by top developers. We might get a couple of T-shirts or a flight jacket. Or, if we make a good suggestion for a game, money. We've always secretly longed to be whisked into the magical and glamorous world of of computer games development...

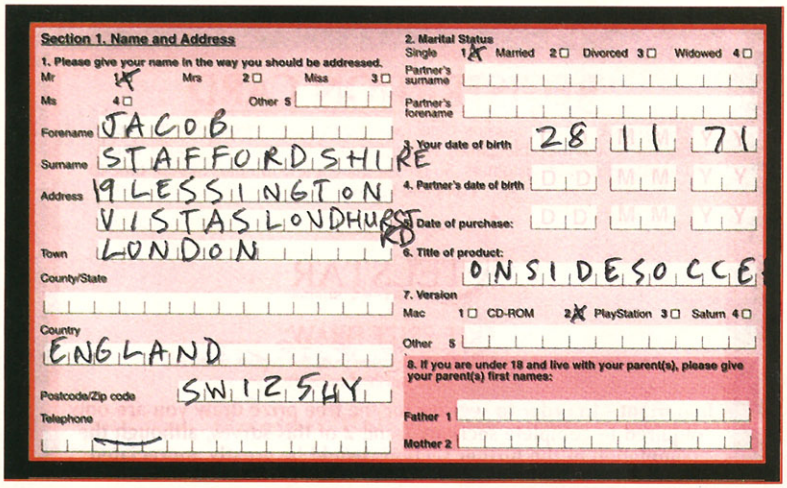
And so it was that we sent off registration cards to 15 of the top games companies. This took several hours. Some of them seem to want to know an awful lot of information about you. Some of it you can explain away as simple customer feedback, and where this was the case, we told them what we thought of the game we had purchased. We were positively eager to inform them what new products we'd like to see them make and what other games of theirs we owned. We nodded feverishly as we ticked all the boxes asking whether we played games on a regular basis. We told them how many

Dear *PC Zone*,
My daddy is a liar, 'cos it was me wot filled in the form 'cos he can't write and it was mainly trying to keep the pen between my paws that made me miss some of the squares. I get good marks at the kennel for writing usually.
Love,
Jake

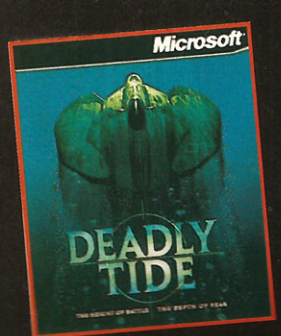
PS. And another thing. Don't you usually pay your models? I mean, all I got was a cheesy Chewit and he told me that that was the NUJ rate.

Help with writing

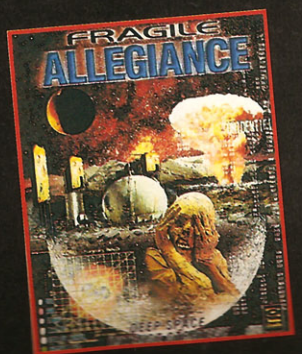
We particularly enjoy filling in the cards that give you little squares to put each letter in, in case you're still on dodgy ground when it comes to writing – and then never give you enough squares for even the simplest address.

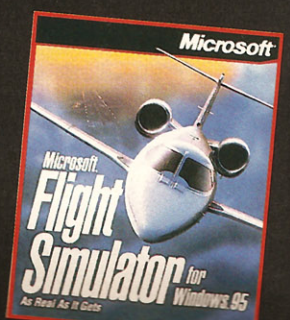












The optimists

Some of the questions asked on the cards are worthy of note. Renegade, for instance, ask your permission to use your comments on the game you've purchased in their advertising, which either shows admirable faith in their products, or a rather touching optimism. Also showing great self-belief are SSI: one of the possible responses to the question "Why did you decide to buy this game?" is "I buy all SSI games". Snork.

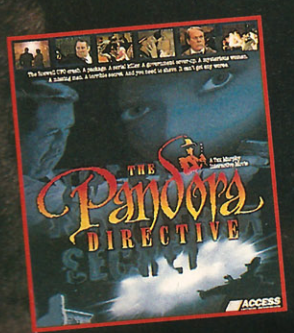
hours a week we spent playing games, and our favourite games and genres (we chose non-PC games).

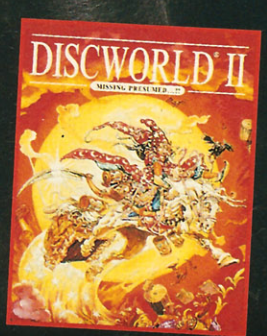
Lies, damned lies and poll responses

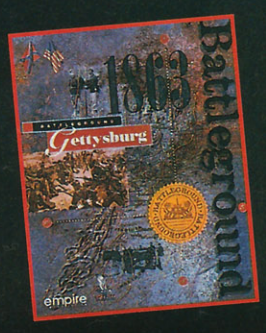
But other questions are more difficult to explain away. Stuff like demographics, the easy assumptions of which always irritate us. So when asked, for example, what magazines and journals we read, we made sure we didn't fit into definite types, just to spoil their models: *Outlaw Biker*, *Period Living*, *Your Cat* and *Piercing Fans International Quarterly* for one; *House and Garden*, *International Tattoo* »

PPS. And just look at my work environment. I'm bound to get RSI – except dogs get it in the tail, knowwotimean? Ruff.

MIFFED MUTT PHOTOGRAPHED BY MIKE HARDING







Hardware specifications

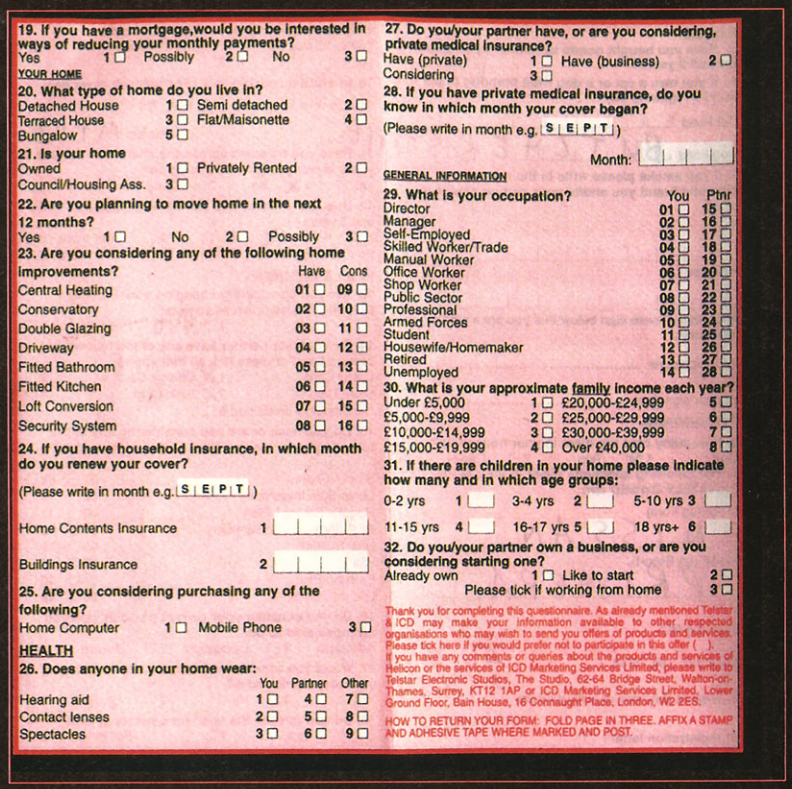
Most of the software companies seemed keen to know what hardware you have in the house. One might almost suspect they're connected to a team of top ram-raiders. It also makes the number of complaints we receive about games being too fast for today's machines more interesting. Most up-to-date hardware checklist was US Gold's: it included Amiga, Atari ST, Archimedes and CD-i among the boxes to tick.

Make Money The Easy Way

Some of the questions you're asked on the cards might be justified – which game you bought and which other games of theirs you own, for example. Others, like which magazines you read, might be forgivable given that it helps them with their advertising. But others, if asked in a pub, would earn the asker a smack in the chops – they're just a mite too nosey.

Only two companies – Virgin and Domark – quarantee that any of the more personal information asked for would be held by them and not made available to anyone else (and all they want is your system info); Europress give you a box to tick to avoid being put on junk-mailing lists. But Telstar's card – a four-page fold-out effort – is a nightmare, seeming to exist entirely to make as much dosh as possible by selling your information on to other people. It's laughable. Among the many questions you're asked are:

- If you have a mortgage, would you be interested in ways of reducing your monthly payments?
- Do you/your partner have, or are you considering, private medical insurance?
- Does anyone in your home wear a hearing aid, contact lenses or spectacles?
- If you own a cat or dog, what brand(s) of pet food do you regularly buy?
- Do you have or are you considering any of the following financial investments? (A list of eight followed).
- Are you considering making any of the following home improvements? (A list, including central heating, double glazing, conservatory, loft conversion, fitted kitchen and basically the main reason behind every pain-in-the-arse phone call you've had in the last five years…)



19. If you have a mortgage,would you be interested in ways of reducing your monthly payments?
Yes 1☐ Possibly 2☐ No 3☐

YOUR HOME

20. What type of home do you live in?
Detached House 1☐ Semi detached 2☐
Terraced House 3☐ Flat/Maisonette 4☐
Bungalow 5☐

21. Is your home
Owned 1☐ Privately Rented 2☐
Council/Housing Ass. 3☐

22. Are you planning to move home in the next 12 months?
Yes 1☐ No 2☐ Possibly 3☐

23. Are you considering any of the following home improvements?

	Have	Cons
Central Heating	01☐	09☐
Conservatory	02☐	10☐
Double Glazing	03☐	11☐
Driveway	04☐	12☐
Fitted Bathroom	05☐	13☐
Fitted Kitchen	06☐	14☐
Loft Conversion	07☐	15☐
Security System	08☐	16☐

24. If you have household insurance, in which month do you renew your cover?
(Please write in month e.g. S E P T)
Home Contents Insurance 1 ☐☐☐
Buildings Insurance 2 ☐☐☐

25. Are you considering purchasing any of the following?
Home Computer 1☐ Mobile Phone 3☐

HEALTH

26. Does anyone in your home wear:

	You	Partner	Other
Hearing aid	1☐	4☐	7☐
Contact lenses	2☐	5☐	8☐
Spectacles	3☐	6☐	9☐

27. Do you/your partner have, or are you considering, private medical insurance?
Have (private) 1☐ Have (business) 2☐
Considering 3☐

28. If you have private medical insurance, do you know in which month your cover began?
(Please write in month e.g. S E P T)
Month: ☐☐☐

GENERAL INFORMATION

29. What is your occupation?

	You	Ptnr
Director	01☐	15☐
Manager	02☐	16☐
Self-Employed	03☐	17☐
Skilled Worker/Trade	04☐	18☐
Manual Worker	05☐	19☐
Office Worker	06☐	20☐
Shop Worker	07☐	21☐
Public Sector	08☐	22☐
Professional	09☐	23☐
Armed Forces	10☐	24☐
Student	11☐	25☐
Housewife/Homemaker	12☐	26☐
Retired	13☐	27☐
Unemployed	14☐	28☐

30. What is your approximate family income each year?
Under £5,000 1☐ £20,000-£24,999 5☐
£5,000-£9,999 2☐ £25,000-£29,999 6☐
£10,000-£14,999 3☐ £30,000-£39,999 7☐
£15,000-£19,999 4☐ Over £40,000 8☐

31. If there are children in your home please indicate how many and in which age groups:
0-2 yrs 1☐ 3-4 yrs 2☐ 5-10 yrs 3☐
11-15 yrs 4☐ 16-17 yrs 5☐ 18 yrs+ 6☐

32. Do you/your partner own a business, or are you considering starting one?
Already own 1☐ Like to start 2☐
Please tick if working from home 3☐

Thank you for completing this questionnaire. As already mentioned Telstar & ICD may make your information available to other respected organisations who may wish to send you offers of products and services. Please tick here if you would prefer not to participate in this offer ( ).
If you have any comments or queries about the products and services of Telicon or the services of ICD Marketing Services Limited, please write to Telstar Electronic Studios, The Studio, 62-64 Bridge Street, Walton-on-Thames, Surrey, KT12 1AP or ICD Marketing Services Limited, Lower Ground Floor, Bain House, 16 Connaught Place, London, W2 2ES.

HOW TO RETURN YOUR FORM: FOLD PAGE IN THREE. AFFIX A STAMP AND ADHESIVE TAPE WHERE MARKED AND POST.

You're also asked when your car and medical insurance began (so that companies know when to start targeting you); whether you're considering changing your bank or building society account; whether you'd consider professional help in arranging your personal finances; and if "you foresee the need for a personal loan".

Let's face it, if you're enough of a mug to fill this stuff in and send it off along with your address and phone number as requested, you'll need full climbing gear to scale the junk mail in your hall each morning, and you'll be answering the phone to Darren, Trevor, Suzy and Debbie from The Hard-of-Hearing Person's Building Society, Automotive Insurance and Double Glazing Company ten times a bloody night for the rest of your life… and you'll deserve everything you get.

« *Art*; *The Guardian* and *Big Ones*, for another. We lied about our salaries (but ask any researcher and they'll tell you that everyone does in these things anyway) and made up what cars we owned. Where it got into annoying stuff that they're obviously going to use to make money by selling on to mail-shot companies (like in Telstar's little encyclopaedia – see *Making Money The Easy Way* boxout), we simply didn't bother. But everything else was filled in diligently. After all, we had a lot to gain by it.

We should mention at this point that we did all this under an assumed name – Jake Staffordshire (my dog) – so that no-one at the companies concerned would recognise it as having come from anyone at the magazine and give it special treatment. (As it turned out, we needn't have bothered.) Anyway, after all that creative lying, we blew all our dinner money on stamps, and got our tongues all tired and smelly licking them, because many of the companies don't even have the style to make their cards postage-paid. Then we posted them, and we waited. And waited. And waited. And now, four months later at the time of writing, we can reveal the results: sod all.



Well, I'm not having it. It's a compromise of my artistic integrity. And as soon as I can work this door out I'm outtahere.

The exciting results

Of the 15 registration cards we sent out, we received two responses. From GT Interactive we got an advertisement for *Final Doom*. And from Digital Integration we got advertisements for all their current games. That's it. We got nothing at all from anyone else.

Perhaps we'll get something from other companies in time. Maybe some companies' infrastructure is such that it takes longer for them to get around to fulfilling many of the things they promise on their cards. Certainly, there have been one or two major reshuffles in the industry of late. But a simple response, saying that your registration card has been received, isn't too much to expect.

Essentially, for all their bleating about software piracy and the benefits of having a proper, officially registered game, the only conclusion you can draw from this is that games companies do bugger all to ensure customer loyalty. If you want upgrades or bug-fixes to a game, you'll usually find it on a PC magazine's cover disk. If you want advance notice of new products, you'll see it in the news pages of games mags before you hear about it from the companies themselves. And as for any little bags of goodies through the post, you can forget it. So start practising your origami, or keep opening your games over the bin. But don't bother filling in those cards. Z



Post modernism

Of the 15 cards we completed, only four had their postage already paid. Telstar, whose card takes longer to complete than many of their games and who seem very keen to know more about your investment and insurance plans than is strictly necessary, still want you to pay for the privilege of them selling your life. SSI's needs a stamp even though you have to post it to the USA. It's all so modern… whatever happened to the caring 90s?

MIFFED MUTT PHOTOGRAPHED BY MIKE HARDING

XTREME LIMITS



RIP STOP £39.99



PVC £69.99



PVC £69.99



RIP STOP DUCK £54.99



PVC £74.99



RECORD BAGS £14.99





NEW YORKER £89.99



METALLIC £84.99

METALLIC £89.99



RUBBER £79.99



PVC £59.99

Name .....

Address .....

.....

.....Postcode .....

Tel: ..... Fax: .....

I enclose ☐ Cheque ☐ Postal Order ☐ Please debit my credit card. Credit Card No.

☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

Expiry Date: .....Signature.....

Introductory offer...FREE carriage on first order, UK mainland. Our jackets come in both duck down and polyfill paddings. Please state your preference when ordering. For a colour catalogue of the full range please call 01992 561788. 14 day delivery on all goods.

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Email 101744.3571@compuserve.com

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Steer Crazy

If you feel silly sitting in front of a computer with anything other than a keyboard and mouse in front of you, turn the page now. Patrick McCarthy's going to lead you through the hugely uncool world of the PC steering wheel.

BEFORE WE GO ANY FURTHER, let's just say right here and now that using a decent analogue joystick, for the most part, is a perfectly acceptable way to play most driving games. Let's also say that even the cheapest steering wheel system here represents a serious financial outlay that's difficult to justify to your loved ones. Furthermore, owning a PC steering wheel will be a source of enormous embarrassment if spotted in your house by a female, coming second only to a used-looking inflatable Margaret Thatcher sex-doll as something guaranteed to have the chicks sprinting away from your batchelor pad in horror.

That's the disclaimers out of the way. Now, any petrol-head knows that to play driving games hunched over a joystick is to take the fast-track to RSI and leave you feeling like you fell into drunken sleep with your forearm beneath a comatose hippopotamus, then shut your wrist in a car door. A steering wheel is not only more comfortable to use, it's a lot easier to slide a car around corners and all those other things that a joystick makes rather tricky.

That's not to say that wheels turn you into a better driver overnight. We tested the wheels on three different games and marked them according to how well they suited the game. Sometimes they improved our performence, other times they didn't. Then there's the cost to consider: for the price of the top two wheels in our round-up, you could make any number of more useful additions to your hardware. But this all overlooks one crucial plus: they're a huge improvement on a joystick and give PC games all the fun of the arcade, without the warm fizzy drinks down the back of the neck and the jabbering teenagers (unless *you're* a jabbering teenager, of course).

None of the wheels require any installation routines to use them. You just plug them in and off you go. The more established ones are directly supported in some games, and the Thrustmaster offerings come with a connector which convinces the more stubborn game that they're joysticks. The F1 Sim (formerly GP500) reads as a joystick anyway. **Z**

MSC MULTISYSTEM - £79.99

(RSD Components 01992 584205)

A flight yoke, steering wheel and motorcycle handlebars all in one. It's very odd: you remove the top half of the wheel to reveal the yoke and twist the yoke handles to make the handlebars. Has a 'footprint' only slightly smaller than a Yeti's and attaches to the table with suction cups. Sticky-backed velcro strips are supposed to attach it to your floor (if you can bear to ruin your stripped pine flooring).

BUILD QUALITY: Not great. Everything's made of the same slippery plastic, and the whole wheel is loose and rattles around because of the three settings.



NETWORK Q RAC RALLY Does the job, but isn't much fun. You bang your knuckles on the base in sharp turns and almost lift it off the table when making sudden corrections. The clips holding the wheel on are right where your hands rest and slide about in use. But at least the gear-changers are on the wheel itself.

SCORE: 5

F1GP2 As with the above game, but with the addition that, as the wheel's range of movement is far less than 180 degrees, tight turns are difficult.

SCORE: 5

NASCAR 2 Keeping those pedals down for ages is a trial for the old calf muscles.

SCORE: 6

OVERALL: Three controllers in one for the price of a pint? (Well, a pint of panda semen, anyway.) It sounds too good to be true – and, sadly, it is. The wheel's movement is restricted and you keep bashing it against its limits if you change direction suddenly. The pedals are small and squidgy and take effort to use; the base bangs your knuckles in sharp turns. And although it's relatively cheap, it still isn't *cheap*.

5

THRUSTMASTER GRAND PRIX 1 - £109.99

(Contemporary Games 01454-855050)

Basically, this is the T2 without pedals and comes with the same clamp and sucker arrangement. Gear changing has been moved up onto the wheel itself, via two buttons. Acceleration and braking are peformed using two flippers behind the wheel.

BUILD QUALITY: Good. Same wheel unit, but the wheel is more tightly sprung, and resists turning more.



NETWORK Q RAC RALLY As with the Thrustmaster Formula T2, only worked with the converter. Having the gear change at your thumb-tips is a great improvement, but using the paddles to accelerate can cramp your fingers after a while – eventually I switched buttons in-game and used the gear-change buttons to accelerate, and automatic gears.

SCORE: 6

F1GP2 Most of the same problems as with *Rally*, but even harder work on a twisting circuit.

SCORE: 5

NASCAR 2: You don't need to change gear that often on a roundabout, but again, accelerating can put a strain on the old digits.

SCORE: 8

OVERALL: Having the gear change at your thumb-tips is an improvement, but using paddles to accelerate is a strain, especially when turning. Usually works more comfortably if you can reverse the controls and use the buttons rather than paddles to accelerate.

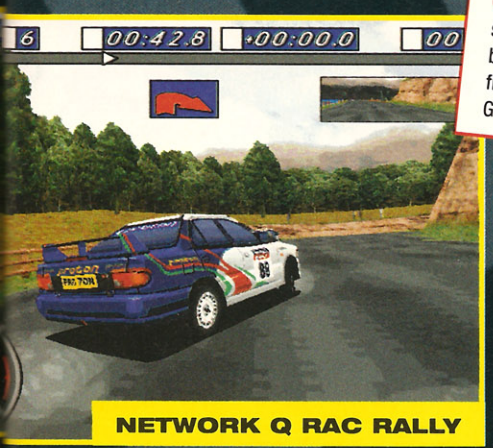
6



NASCAR 2



F1GP2



NETWORK Q RAC RALLY



SEGA RALLY

THRUSTMASTER FORMULA T2 - £169.99

(Contemporary Games 01454-855050)
It comes in three pieces – the wheel, the base for the wheel and the pedal unit. The pedals plug into the joystick port and the wheel into the Y-cable from the pedals. There are sucker pads and two desk clamps for the wheel unit and four stick-on rubber pads for the pedals. It has comprehensive set-up instructions, including how to calibrate it with various games.

BUILD QUALITY: Good. A solid wheel and sturdy pedal unit, but there's slight lateral movement in the wheel shaft.



NETWORK Q RAC RALLY Only worked after I plugged in the little converter that sits between the connector and the joystick port, which tricks the game into thinking it's a joystick – but it worked perfectly with it. Changing gear with the gear stick is a problem and meant driving one-handed most of the time.

SCORE: 7

F1GP2 Again, worked perfectly, but also again, the nature of the game and the inclusion of the 'proper' gear stick meant a lot of one-handed driving – which is less easy to get away with in *Formula 1*.

SCORE: 6

NASCAR 2 Worked well, and given that you only change gear about twice in *NASCAR* racing, the gear stick was no problem.

SCORE: 9

OVERALL Pedals have a weird way of rocking forwards on their shafts, which is unsettling if you're not wearing shoes. The footrest could be heavier and the clamps tended to slip slightly on my (admittedly weirdly-finished) desk, but would be better if they had a different gripping surface. Gear stick may be a problem. But it's good overall, well built and sturdy.

7

PC ZONE RECOMMENDED

F1 SIM - £249

(RC Simulations 01725 474550)
Reviewed in Issue 43 as the GP500 Race Centre, it's been repackaged and its price lowered by a less than massive 20 quid. Comes with a number of optional extras, including a clutch (£49.99); a vibrating shaft (£27.75, plus power unit, £29.95); a wind-in-your-face simulator (honest) which attaches to the wheel shaft; and even a full F1 bodyshell, at a cool £1,800. Has paddles where your fingers rest to change gear, or buttons within reach of your thumbs.

BUILD QUALITY: Excellent throughout. Everything feels solid, heavy and well made. Wheel clamps into a large wooden base, on which you put your monitor or system box to weigh it down. Pedals plug into joystick port, wheel into pedals at base. The wheel even has a stitched cover!



NETWORK Q RAC RALLY Gear changing is crisp and easy, and steering very precise. Basically, there's nothing you can fault this steering-wheel on.

SCORE: 8

F1GP2 It's very good for F1-style driving.

SCORE: 8

NASCAR 2 And it's very good for *NASCAR*, too.

SCORE: 9

OVERALL The best thing you can say about this is that you don't notice you're using it, which means they've got everything right. It is *extremely* well made, and worked perfectly with everything we tried it on. The only criticism is the price, which is phenomenal. But if you can afford it, you won't regret it.

8

the cybertwats

"HOLIDAY IN VIRTUALAND"
episode er... six. I think.

Hex Download Joe Winnock

by charlie brooker

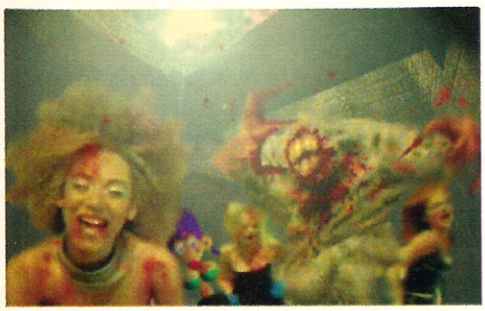
The Story So Far...

Huh? Oh, you want to know what's going on do you? Finding it all a bit hard to follow, are we? Poor little you. My heart bleeds for you. Can you hear it? Drip, drip, drip... that's what it's doing. No really, I do sympathise. You arsehole. You scumsucking bag of dried-out dogshit. People like you make me puke- do you know that? PUKE. I want to PUKE on you. You SCUM- you SICKENING, SICKENING SCUM. Do me a favour and drop dead. RIGHT THIS MINUTE.









YO! I'll tell you what I want
What I really really want



I really really really wanna
Gib-a-Gib-Aaaaarrrggghhh



If you wanna be my lover,
You'll have to get past my friends



They'll smack your nose big time
So it never me-nds



If you wanna be my lover
You are going to bleed



Endless pints of crimson
Spurting at high speed



Slam the buggers down
And punch 'em to the ground



Or kick 'em in the teeth
and watch 'em spin around



Slam the buggers down
and Gib-a-Gib-Aaaaarrrrgggghhh

ZONE ON-LINE

PIPEX DIAL 90

SHOOT 'N SURF

Hangover. Guilt. Squitty tummy. *Quake*. Every Fragmeister's Saturday PM. David McCandless is full of the joys of spring.

IT'S SATURDAY AFTERNOON AND FOR THE average rounded individual this means you've woken up beside your flatmate's girlfriend. You can't quite remember. Your pants are on – backwards. A drum'n'bass club from Dalston seems to have set up shop in your forehead. Your throat is dry, your lips chapped with scabs, and you've just noticed the glass of 'mineral water' you've been drinking all night has a fag butt in it. And your poo is black with the Guinness of the night before.

The next stop for the average rounded individual is, of course, a darkened room and a copy of 'The Empire Strikes Back', followed perhaps by a large fried breakfast circa 4PM. But this is the 'wired' age. Technology beckons. Why waste an afternoon explaining you were drunk, and although there's respect and like on both sides, maybe... well, mistake is a big word, maybe 'temporary lapse of reason', no, I'm not being pompous, oh, I sure wasn't being pompous last night, was I? I'm just – look just get the HELL OUT OF MY HOUSE, YOU HUSSIE!

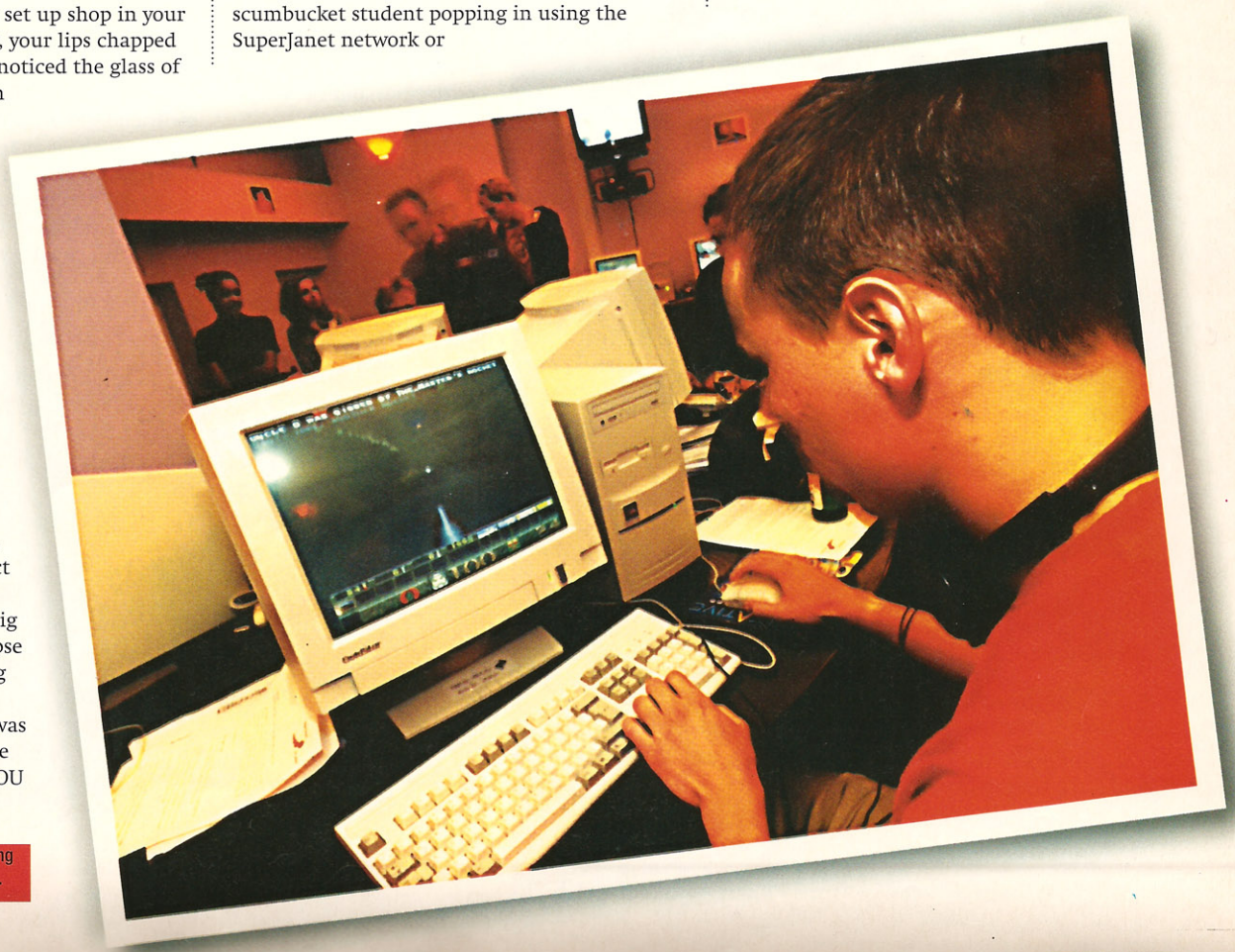
Ahem. In the hedonistic 90s, the best cure for a hangover and sexual indelicacy is a big, fat, juicy *Quake* session. A release of tension, a nice wave of adrenaline to cleanse your system, a bit of laugh, and a bit of motion sickness to upset your stomach a bit more. You could always use your modem and dial into a server, play *Quakus ad nauseam*, with mineral water within reach. But wouldn't you rather go out into the sun, have a cup of coffee, see the whites of your opponent's eyes, and play on a real, fast, local area network (LAN)? Sure you would. You need to go to Shoot'n'Surf then, a new(ish) network games cafe in Holborn, central London.

Internet *Quake* is great, but it has one major failing – lag. The delay between you pressing a key and the on-screen reaction is called a 'ping', measured in miliseconds. On a good day, with a good fast connection, you can get the ping down to 150MS – perfectly acceptable for a good game. Problem is, your ping can vary madly, and often when 10 or more players are strutting their stuff on a server the whole thing can start to chug. Also, if you get some scumbucket student popping in using the SuperJanet network or their college's fast ISDN link, their ping can be as low as 50. And if they're good, they will clean up. And win the game. And annoy you.

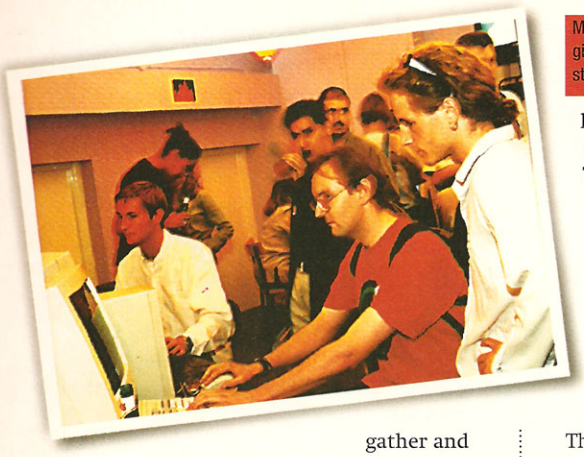
A LAN is different. It's a level playing field. Everyone has pings in the sub-30MS range and it's joyously smooth, even with 16 players simultaneously exploding into their component body-parts and with waves of gibs splashing against the cobblestones. It's this kind of exhilaration which led Tony and Kelvin to start up Shoot'n'Surf as a place where gamers could experience the orgiastic rush of network gaming in a comfortable, non-smelly environment with absolutely no flatmate girlfriend in attendance.

The endearing thing about Shoot'n'Surf is that it's been set up by gamers for gamers. Both Tony and Kelvin discovered the god at college. *Doom*, that is. "We were so into it," says Tony. "We just couldn't stop playing it." And so profound was their addiction that Kelvin failed his Maths and er, Philsophy degree. Tony just managed to scrape through on his Computer Science studies. Then, after seeing so many poncey 'cyber cafes' sprout up, expousing their body-pierced vision of the Internet and networks, the boys decided that it was time for a new cafe. »

"We just wanted a place where people could



Bang, bang, bang. I'm so bloody hung over. Bang, bang, bang. I feel sick...



gather and kill each other," says Kelvin. "Somewhere, where you could do Web stuff, IRC, and all that, but mainly play *Quake*, or *Doom*, or any network game against your friends or in teams."

Details

Address: Shoot 'n' Surf, 13 New Oxford Street

Nearest tube: Tottenham Court Road

Phone: 0171 419 1183

Web: http://www.shootnsurf.co.uk/

Open: 10am to 9pm

Price: £5.00 an hour (£3.50 concessions)

Membership: £20 (students £15) with five free hours (half hour for students). Free 30 minutes for every new member you introduce. Members can book machines via Web, e-mail or phone, and get 10% discount if they block book in advance. Also additional e-mail account for £1 a week.

Macca's flatmate's girlfriend? – and I'm stuck playing *Quake*...

After a quick exploration of their local bank manager's colon, the boys had the financial capital to start their venture. They leased a premises on New Oxford Street, bought 19 Pentium 100s, equipped them with 24MB RAM a-piece, sorted a fast Internet connection and then, most importantly, hooked everything up into a mighty network. With a few of their uni friends in the kitchen, preparing coffees and club sandwiches, these two children of Thatcher had themselves an enterprise.

Three months down the line, Shoot'n'Surf plays host to many networks games. *Quake*, *Doom*, *Duke Nukem*, *Quake*, *Command & Conquer*, *Z*, *Quake*, *Euro 96*, *Quake*, *RAC Rally*, *Fatal Racing*, and *Quake*. Mainly *Quake*. To this end, the boys made the mistake of inviting the Lord of *Quake*, GibGod, the UberFragmeister, the Master, the Emperor (ie. me) down for a bit of a Saturday afternoon rumble. Silly boys.

I came. I saw. I conquered. Respect is due to the boys, however. It is apparent that Tony and Kelvin work every day, seven days a week, 10AM to 9PM, running a *Quake* network. Their skills are impressive, their reactions sharp, their coffee nice tasting. The games are well organised. Servers are set up without too much ceremony, with slots between six and 12 players (any more can get hectic and tellyfraggy for most people's liking). Several games run at once, allowing you to flip from game to game at your whim.

An on-going *Quake* ladder is being organised. Several clans and groups of on-line chums have descended on the place to settle scores. It is a bit pricey (£5 per hour, £3.50 concessions) but the baby-bot smoothness of network play is worth every penny. Also, if you've started a clan, what better arena is there to practise your tactics, or for a bit of practice and grudge-matchery?

"'Ere, mind where you shove that bloody joystick!" "Sorry, Joy..."

So far the clientele is much as you would expect. Young blokes, aged 15 to 35, with a smattering of local biz guys. Their skills vary. A lot of keyboard players or mice virgins seem to be in residence, but there is an occasional challenge. Tony and Kelvin are hoping, however, to recuit more – wahay – girls. "We get American girl students coming in to send e-mail to their friends in the States." Talking about leg warmers and body perms no doubt. "But gangs of girls playing *Quake* is rare."

So, if you're hung over on a Saturday afternoon, riven with mid-week tension, or just trying to get away from your flatmate's girlfriend (the harlot), pop by Shoot'n'Surf and challenge the managers to a game of *Quake*. And who knows, you may be able to take a pop at the old master himself. Which, ironically enough, is what my flatmate will soon want to do. Maybe I could convince him to settle our little dispute in a virtual *Quake* arena. Yeah, and then maybe not. Z

Presentation of this coupon at Shoot'n'Surf will entitle you to one free hour of Internet activity and gory network thuggery.

I ..... would like to kill other people in a virtual sense.

My real life address is .....

.....

.....

My post code is .....

My e-mail address is .....

I am/am not interested in receiving notification of forthcoming tournaments and offers.

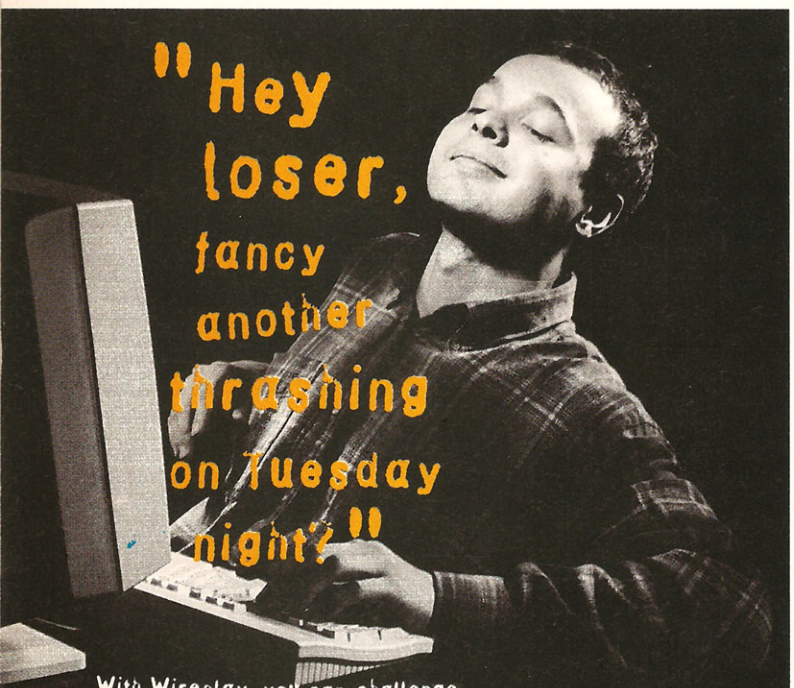
I rate myself:

❑ Poo ❑ So-so ❑ Not bad

❑ Pretty Good ❑ Ninja

Some things to consider:

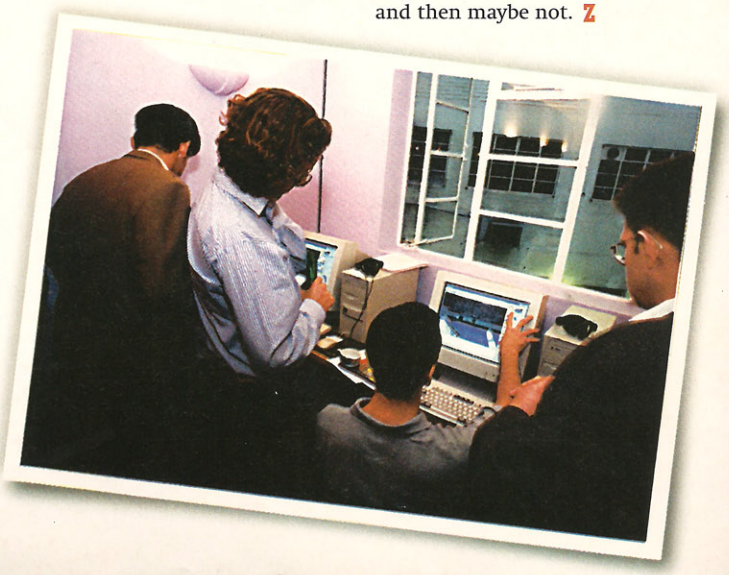
1. This offer is only open to non-members of Shoot'n'Surf. **2.** You must bring a bona fide copy of this coupon with you (ie. no photocopies). Bring the entire mag with you if you don't want to chop your mag up. **3.** The offers last from 3rd January 1997 to 31st January 1997 inclusive. **4.** The management of Shoot'n'Surf reserves the right to exclude admittance.



With Wireplay, you can challenge other gamers across the UK, multiplayer or head-to-head. There are 18 games so far, including Duke Nukem, EF2000 and Euro 96, plus our own news service packed with the latest results, prize competitions, tournaments, leagues and all the industry news and gossip.

Wireplay

The games network from BT



Ultima Online



My, oh my. Just what the world needs. After the sad delights of *Meridian 59*, the on-line fantasy world, now we must prepare ourselves for the torrid tight leather hosery of *Ultima On-Line*, Origin's first move into Internet gaming, due to be launched in the Spring. We spoke to Starr Long (yes, Starr Long), producer and director of this 'opus', on the old-fashioned dog and bone. Note for *Ultima* fans: Richard 'Bonkers' Garriot, aka Lord British, is executive producer.

PCZ: What is *Ultima On-Line*? [Crass opener we know, but one must 'break the ice'.]

SL: Well, basically, it's a fantasy role-playing game. Internet only. We'll be having 2 to 3,000 players all running around one single world with 16 cities and eight dungeons. It'll take eight hours to walk from one end to the other. It's also a persistent world. It keeps going when you log off and it has its own resources, and ecology, and closed economic system.

PCZ: Er, blimey. It's using the *Ultima VIII* engine, right?

SL: No.

PCZ: Well, it looks like the *Ultima VIII* engine.

SL: Well, it's similar. Actually it's more like the *Crusader: No Remorse* engine. It's third-person, 16-bit colour in SVGA with 3D terrain. But the characters are smaller so we can fit more of them on-screen.

PCZ: And you play...?

SL: You play a character, completely configurable in all senses: hair and skin colour, gender, hairstyle, clothing, armour, sword, glovers, shoes, underwear – everything. We reckon there are over 20 million combinations.

PCZ: Will you be able to have a mullet?

SL: What's a mullet?

PCZ: It's like permed on – never mind. Go on...

SL: The *Ultima On-Line* universe is a dynamic world. You can do everything you can do in the real world, plus everything you can do in a fantasy role-playing adventure. You can cast over 100 spells, camp in the woods, join guilds, die, form gangs, learn skills, get rich, lose all your money, kill monsters, get arrested, meet girls – everything.

PCZ: Sounds a bit like *Meridian 59*.

SL: Yeah, it is similar to *Meridian 59* – to a point. A big thing with Ultima – although it sounds like a small thing – is the way text is handled. In *Meridian 59*, what other characters say is in a separate window. This means you have to switch your eyes to look at what's being said and it's impossible to play the game at the same time. In our game, the text appears above the character's head. So you can read it, carry on with what you're doing, and work out who said it. In games like *Meridian 59*, you have to stop and work out which character has said what. In ours, it's seamless. »



Ultima On-line will no doubt feature loads of Americans who shout "Hey you guys!" all the time.



More than just a forum where you can team up with your mates to fight monsters and chat up girls, *Ultima On-line* is a vast, vast adventure with hundreds of interesting quests to embark upon.

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Isn't that a rather personal question to ask a lady? What are 'regents' anyway?



The meeting place in the middle of town – where players congregate to harass the locals.

PCZ: Yeah, ok, sounds good. What else?
SL: Games like *Meridian 59* suffer from something called 'room mentality'. That is, you go into a room, kill the orc which jumps out at you, get the treasure and leave. Then, x amount of time later, or even when you walk straight back in, the orc is back again, and the treasure is there again. *Ultima* is different.
PCZ: How exactly?
SL: Well, for instance, in one part of the world there's this dragon who lives in the forest and eats all the woodland deer. A bunch of adventurers came along and killed all the deer so they could sell the meat to the local butcher. The dragon obviously became hungry so started attacking the local village, eating livestock and people. A couple of people came across the town and were instantly surrounded by people, asking them to kill the dragon for 2,000 gold pieces. So off they went on that quest. But the point is – WE DIDN'T PROGRAM THAT.
PCZ: Do what?
SL: That quest evolved. We set up the ecology, the non-playing characters, the geography, and programmed the dragon with certain natural characteristics, like hunger. And it just happened.



Chased by angry 'skellingtons' along the coastline. Nothing like stating the obvious, is there?

PCZ: Are all the puzzles and quests like that?
SL: Not all. We have all sorts of quests – fetch and carry, murder mystery etc. – and most are linked to the world state and sometimes just spring up unexpectedly. Stuff like the dungeons are pretty much planned out in typical *Ultima* fashion. Loads of teleports, traps, secret doors and levers to pull to solve puzzles and avoid hazards. But even these are scripted, so the solutions to one lever puzzle will be different next time around.
PCZ: Ok, we'll accept that's cool, but why haven't you done a *Quake*-style engine instead of this weirdo forced perspective thing?
SL: We don't believe 3D first-person perspective is the best approach. It's great for *Quake*, of course, but the emphasis in *Ultima* is teaming up, playing together. In *Meridian 59*, you get more than ten people on the screen and it becomes a mess. In *Ultima On-line*, we can have a hundred people on screen simultaneously. This makes for great, co-ordinated battles. You can be the general and command one set of troops to flank on this side, or another to bring up the rear of whatever.
PCZ: It's all very well having tons and battles and that, but what happens when you die?
SL: Basically, when you die in the game, your body and all your stuff gets left behind and the whole screen goes black and white. You become a ghost. You're in the spirit world. You can float around wherever you want, go through walls if you like. You can even appear to people and try to talk to them, but all they'll hear is 'wooooooooh....wooooooh.' [Starr makes convincing all fashioned ghosty noises. We all feel scared.] Only if they cast a seance spell will they be able to understand you. To get re-incarnated you have to find a healer or somebody to bring you back to life. Then you get your stuff back – if it hasn't been stolen.
PCZ: Yeah, well, that might be a good idea as well. But how are characters going to develop?



Beta testing begins early in '97 – after that, who knows, there could be zillions of people playing Ultima On-line.

SL: Well, we're not going for the levels and experience angle. Too many times in these games you get somebody who's been at it for weeks, has become all powerful and only has to sneeze on somebody to kill them. In *Ultima*, you simply learn skills. From sword, archery, and other combat skills, right through to map-making, baking, music and cloth-making to earn money. You can get rudimentary skills just by watching a skilled character, but then you have to train to develop them. But they degrade with time so you have to keep them up.
PCZ: Will Richard 'Three brussels short of a Sunday Lunch' Garriot make an appearance?
SL: He already has, as Lord British. A bunch of people got together and started a guild to try to assassinate him. They failed.
PCZ: Is he really three spring onions short of a Malaysian sexual offence?
SL: Er, no. He's a really nice bloke.
PCZ: Bo. But how real is it going to be? How are crimes going to be punished?
SL: There are police in the game, but mainly in the cities. If you commit a heinous crime in the towns, you'll often have to flee to the countryside and live like an outlaw. Or you'll be executed. In the alpha test, we had two people set up a prostitution ring down in the docks. A guy and a girl. He was the pimp and took 50 gold pieces off the clients. She would then strip down to her underwear and talk dirty to him
PCZ: Underwear? Cool. So dirty talk is allowed?
SL: There's an obscenity filter you can turn on to censor foul-mouthed characters. Or you can turn off somebody's text altogether.
PCZ: Will it censor out the word 'minge'?
SL: Er, I'm not sure.
PCZ: What about 'trouser trident'?
SL: Again, I'm not sure. We've got a list of words.
PCZ: Does it contain the phrase 'toasted semen biscuit'?
SL: Er, I've really got to go. Bzzzzzzzz. [Click.] Z

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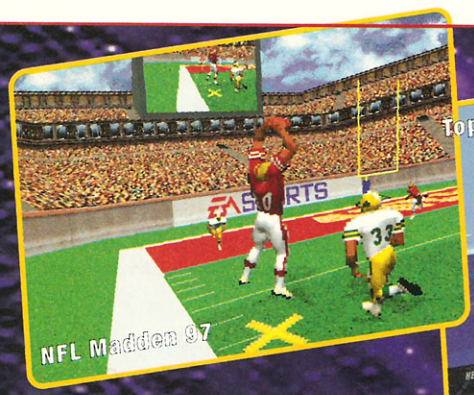
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THE TRUE PLAYERS™

The Boggit's Mailbag

Dragonsphere

In ye olde adventure game, *Dragonsphere*, how do I get past the shape-shifter monster? And how do I get the Butterfly King to talk to me?

Please help me, because soon the sphere will break and alas my kingdom will be gone. And there will also be a bloody great big hole in my monitor screen!

Mark Webster, Kings Lynn.

I never did like this game. Yes, it looks nice, and it comes in a really pretty box, but I just couldn't get a handle on it at all. However, lucky for you, I do have a magical item called a walkthrough which makes all things clear.

The answers to the quiz questions which the Butterfly King asks are:

1. *Anyone*
2. *I don't know*
3. *Trouble*
4. *Callash*
5. *I won't like it*

He will give you a red stone.
Answers to the second part – don't choose:

1. *Hostile Race*
2. *Fairies*
3. *Prejudiced*

To get past the nasty shifter you will need to use the doll to heal him, which will get you into the village. You'll find the doll on the floor of a cave in the Land of Shifters.

You do know that in this game you have to put a rat in the fridge to make a ratsicle, don't you? How sick can you get!

Noctropolis

I know how to get to the Succubus, and I also know how to get away once the Succubus has bitten my neck, but I always end up dying from the bite.

What am I supposed to do?

Raymond Fury, Gwent

You lucky, lucky bastard. I used to dream about being ravaged by a Succubus. I'll bet it's got bright red sticky lips, with dark, 'come to bed' eyes and a great line in breakfasts. I'll admit that I've got no idea what a Succubus is, but the name sounds good enough for me.

Now then, where was I? Oh yes, I remember. You're supposed to have a cold bath afterwards. That's it, you're supposed to return to Shadowlair and immerse yourself in the black pool to heal yourself.

You didn't get her telephone number by any chance?



(Top right) *Aliens*, schmaliens, gimme a bus pass or I'll blow you to smithereens (*that's* green *pass* – *Ed.*)

(Below right) *Ultima VIII* – the key is to sweet-talk Madam Mordea's maid. Oh yeah?

Aliens

Where do I find the green pass to get me into the elevator at the beginning of the game?

Doug England, Ashby-de-la-Zouche.

Find Lora in one of the nearby cabins and talk to her using the fifth option. Reply to her using the first option and she'll give you the card you seek.

Ultima VIII – Pagan

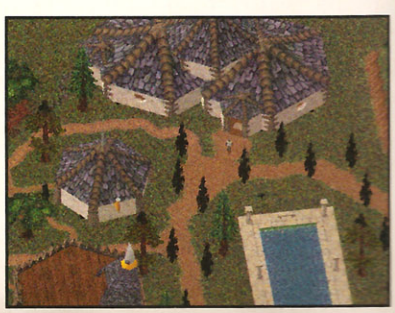
I've been stuck in this game for half a year and it's getting booooooring! People are beginning to doubt my tellings of glorious battles with the Guardian and such people of evil. Can you please help me out?

What do I do to get her ladyship, Madam Mordea, to believe that I'm a good bloke who comes to her realm to obey her rules, laws and so on?

What am I supposed to do in that Pit of Death thingy? Is it just another false lead?

Caram Kapp, Egypt

This is a tough game to answer questions on, for it's so damn complicated. However,



here are some points which should get you out of one pile of Troll muck and point you in the direction of the next heap.

I would avoid the dreaded Mordea and talk instead to her maid. The maid will tell you to come and see her later at her home in East Tenebrae. When you see her later, be nice to her and ask about a dagger. She'll give you a key which gets you into Mordea's place and opens a chest which is there. Take the dagger from the chest and give it to Vividos in the cemetery.

Firstly, you will need the Scion key to get into the Pit of Death. Once inside you have two options. The first is to find the key to the Conventicle of the Dead, which is hidden under a skeleton near the Zealan God Statues. The other way is to go to the southernmost doors (at which point you'll see a pile of mud in the top right-hand corner of your screen) and cast the Create Golem spell. You can now order the Golem to open the door for you.

Indiana Jones and the Fate of Atlantis

I'm in Crete where all the ruins are and I've found the bull's head statue and the tail statue. What am I supposed to do with them? I know it has something to do with the mural in one of the rooms, but I don't know what.

M.B. Wembley

First, you need to find the surveyor's instrument. Put that in place so that when you look through it you are facing the bull's horns in the centre of the ruins. From the bull's head, align the vertical line with the edge of the right horn. From the bull's tail, align it with the edge of the left horn. When you've done it properly, a dotted line will appear and show you where a Moonstone is hidden.

Realms of Arkania – Star Trail

If you can help, then please bloody do so. I'm in the vault beneath Tjolmar where there is a fountain and a block of ice with a woman inside. Yes, yes, I want the woman!

In the fountain there is this flaming red key, but if I try to get the key I get frost bite.

D.B. Martini, Nottinghamshire

We all want a woman, so that doesn't make you so special. I just happen to want one with thigh-length boots and a whip, but that's another story. However, just because it's you, here is a step-by-step guide for this part of the game.

Read the document you received from the first encounter, then pull the branches in the three locations on the eastern Level 1. Get the Flame key from the tree in eastern Level 1. Pull the hooks inside the wall in western Level 1. Split your party and send one person to push the gate back up into the ceiling. Reunite party and exit the caged-in room. Cast 'Melt Solid' to free the woman. Take the second Flame key from the fountain. Walk through wall to find the Black Statuette. Go down stairs to Level 2. Z

THE HACK MASTERS™

Cheats, who wants them? Well, you do, it seems – despite all that your mother told you. There is no hope for you after all, is there?



Crusader – No Regret

Did you know that you can run this game with a couple of additional command line parameters?

Add the following to the start command:

warp X (where X is a level number) to begin at any level;

skill X (where X is the skill level you want to have).

Megarace 2

One thing we all could do with more of is money. Remember, you can never be too rich, or too thin.

Here is one way to boost your wad in the *Megarace 2* stakes:

1. Save the game in the first position. (You'll have to finish the Foundry first.)
2. Leave the game, then make a copy of the file GAME.SAV.
(e.g. COPY GAME.SAV GAME.BAK)
3. Using any text editor, create a new file called CHEAT.SCR and insert the following lines into it:

```
e 124 3F 42 0F
w
q
```

4. Now run the game using the command:

```
DEBUG GAME.SAV < CHEAT.SCR
```

Now when you load up your save game you'll have more money than sense. Hmmm. That doesn't sound very much, does it?

War Wind

It's a tough life when you have to compete with a load of nasty life forms who seem bent on losing their weapons up your nose, but here are a few cheat codes which will give the slimy swine pause for thought:

First, press the 'Enter' key, then type any one of the following magic combinations:

!THE SUN ALSO RISES	Removes the Fog of War.
!GOLDEN BOY	Adds 5,000 points to your Clan's Total
!PUMP AN AHRN	Gives your Clan Leader full prestige.

Earthseige

Did you know that if you come out of your current campaign in *Earthsiege* and start a new one, you will be able to build the heavy Hercs from later on in the game?

(Submitted by Brett Williams, Horsham)

(Top right) *Megarace 2* – more money than sense.

(Far right) Question – what do frightened soldiers get (apart from friendly fire)? Answer – *War Wind*, ha, ha.



Daggerfall

I know most RPG fanatics are light-fingered swine at the best of times, but here's a method of shoplifting that I suspect even they don't know about.

Enter a shop just before midnight and loiter until it's just gone past its closing time. If you now select a shelf as if you were going to buy something, you'll find that you'll be shown your backpack menu instead of the usual buy and sell screen. You may now unload everything off the shelf and into your pack without having to pay. This trick becomes really useful when you have a wagon, as you can empty all the shelves in the shop then sell them elsewhere to make tons of cash. The only place that this trick doesn't seem to work is the bookshop.

(Submitted by J.P. Shakespeare)

Syndicate Wars

Sending agents in long black trenchcoats halfway around the world to shoot people is all very well, but if you want to make sure that they have enough money in their pockets to have a good time when they get there you really do need this cheat.

Simply edit the PLAY.BAT file and insert the characters /m at the end of the line.

Now when you are in the Command Centre of the game (between missions), pressing the period key will boost your bank account.

(Submitted by K. Gilson)

Settlers 2

If playing God with lots of little people is your thing, but you are crap at it (*Like the real thing? – Ed.*), then here are a couple of miracles you can use.

Type THUNDER and then //ALT-1// – //ALT-6// This will speed up things a lot!

With //ALT-6// your men are invisible when moving on roads, and the time taken to build a structure is about three seconds.

//ALT-7// displays the whole map.

Caesar II

Lowly foot soldiers who dream of becoming the Emperor of the Roman world may find that typing the command "AUTO WIN!" is a lot easier than slogging their guts out on a long and bloody campaign. But who wants a life of endless pleasure that they haven't earned the hard way? Well, we would, actually. Z

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Tomb Raider

Not many games comes up to the high standard that makes a classic PC game, but *Tomb Raider* has got to be one of them. This game has more twists than the devil's corkscrew and we loved exploring all of them. However, as not everyone is as wonderful, clever, and good-looking as the Taskmasters, here's something to help you lesser mortals get through the sticky bits.

LIKE MANY PUZZLE GAMES OF THIS type, *Tomb Raider* has secret areas which do not need to be explored simply in order to finish the game. This walkthrough will attempt to mention some of the secrets that we found, but there are no guarantees that we found them all.

The first thing to realise is that this game will allow you to get into an unwinable position, so do keep lots of save games. Jump the wrong way, or destroy the wrong floor tile, and there is no way back! Also remember you can jump further if you take a run at it.

Level 1 – The Caves.

Follow the wolves' footprints to where they first appear beneath a ledge. Run and jump up onto the ledge. Find the »



SPOILED







« locked door at the base of the steps and open it using the wall switch. In the room with the golden gate, there is supposedly a hidden switch to open the gate, but if you can't find it (and we didn't!) jump out of the room on the opposite side and cross two bridges to find another doorway, which will eventually bring you to a ledge on the other side of the golden gate. Jump across to the opposite ledge and find the wall switch to open the next gate. Jump down into the passageway behind the golden gate and leave through the final exit door.

Level 2 – City of Vilcabama

Find the door with the switch in the large silver panel beside it. Open the door and go up the stairs. Jump across the gap to stand on the opposite window ledge – don't walk forward! Jump sideways down into the room below to avoid destroying two crumbly floor tiles in front of the window. Move the large cube which blocks the exit door, then go forward and collect the silver key and the gold statue. Return to the block room and push and pull the block to line it up with the two suspended ceiling tiles. Climb onto the block, then using 'nimble fingers' jump back up and out.

(Note: There is an extra first aid kit in a secret alcove above the door which was jammed up by the block.)

Back in the entrance room, you can jump down into the pool to discover two secret wall switches. One switch opens a door in a serpent room which contains magnum clips; another room contains more first aid.

Use the silver key to open the locked door in the main area. At the end of the deadly alley stand two locked doors and an entrance to a swimming pool. By jumping and moving quickly, you can reach a final room containing a wall switch which opens one of the two externally locked doors.

(Note: Exit by the window to find some shotgun shells.)

Enter the second external door and again climb the walls to find the switch to open the final door.

The final passage leads to a pool outside a room containing a bear. Swim underwater to find another pool leading up to a balcony above the bear. Throw the wall switch to open the gate in the bear room, then jump down into the pool. Leave the pool, dodge the marauding bear and use the gold statue to open the wall to freedom.

Level 3 – Lost Valley

Jump into the stream and take a trip over the waterfall. Exit the water and enter the crevice on the left. Just before you reach the end of this tunnel, climb the white rock face to find the entrance to the secret valley. Kill all of the dinosaurs, using the side tunnels and platforms to shoot at them from safety.

You must now find three large gear wheels. The first is hidden at the bottom of the well in the ruined temple. The second is on one side of the ruined bridge. (You can jump up there from the ground if you position yourself right.) Find the waterfall, which you can dive into, and follow it through to a cave with a Raptor in it. There is a ledge at the side which is the first of a large number of blocks you can climb.

At the very top is the last gear wheel. Return to the starting position of the level, then head upstream to a side alcove where you can run and jump to the opposite bank. Continue jumping backwards and forwards across the river until you reach the bridge. Cross the bridge and insert the three cogs into the wall mechanism. Pull the wall switch to close a gate which stops the flow of water over the large waterfall. (At this point you can travel further up river to find a hidden first aid kit.) Walk to the base of the large waterfall and enter a passage which has now been revealed. Through this tunnel you'll find the exit door.



(Right) One of the missing cogs is hidden at the bottom of the well in the ruined temple. So providing you have escaped the attentions of the Lost Valley's dinosaurs, this is where you must come in the end.







Level 3B – Tomb of Qualopec

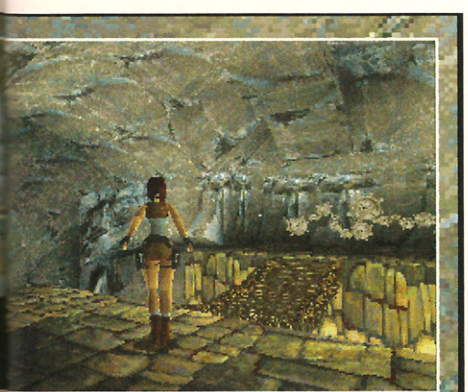
Enter the large red room and use the wall switch to the right, deal with the two Raptors, then enter the tunnel on the right. The three rooms which now confront you have a number of wall switches which must be executed to open three gates to the room which contains the Scion.

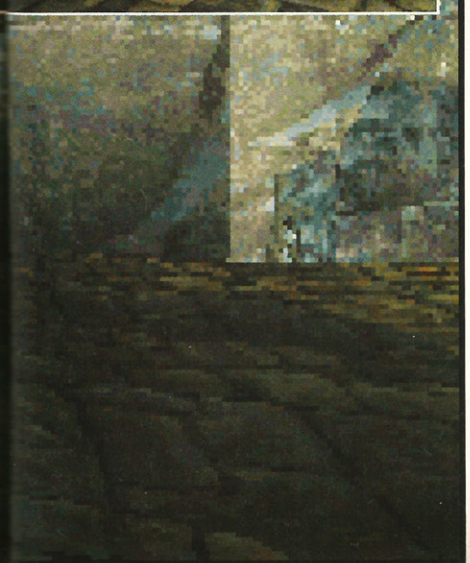
The room to the left contains a sunken area with a large statue facing a wall switch. The floor beneath the wall switch collapses when you stand on it, dropping you into a pit of wolves. This wall switch cannot be operated and is a red-herring which can be ignored.

The next room contains a block which seals a doorway. Push this block, then push a side block which is then revealed. The dodgy floor which lies between you and the wall switch can be jumped.

The third room contains a wall switch and a window into a room. Pressing the wall switch moves the block. DON'T DO IT YET! Jump into the room, then exit out of the side door which leads up to the top of the other large block which stands in the room. Jump sideways off this block to another alcove and thence through various passageways to end up on the first unmoved block. Jump sideways from here and then up to find the switch which controls the other block. Return to the first wall switch and move it. You should now be able to use the two blocks to jump across the spikes and find the final wall switch. Collect the now available Scion object.

Return to the waterfall area of Level 3 and shoot Larsen.





Level 4 – St Francis Folly

Move the block onto each of the omega signs to open door. Enter door and operate two wall switches to open the high-level door outside. Use the sliding block to jump onto the central pillars and across the room to the opposite side. From here get through the high door.

(Note: There is a secret area on the wall on the same side of the room as the sliding block.)

Find the shotgun and then use the switch to lower the water level. Enter the central area with the tower. The tower contains the four switches to open the side areas – Thor, Atlas, Neptune and Damocles. Ignore the hammer in Thor. Jump over the rolling boulder in Atlas, then jump up to reach a ledge in the passage wall.

Collect the key from each area, then unlock the door at the bottom of the tower.

Level 5 – Coliseum

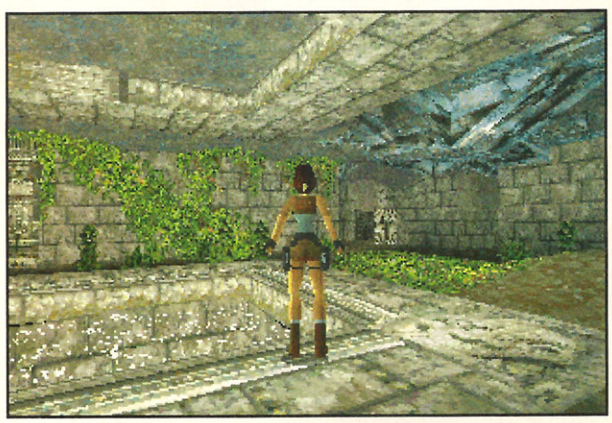
Climb out of the water and get up onto the external ledge on the second level of the building in front of you. (Jump onto the first level from nearby rocks.)

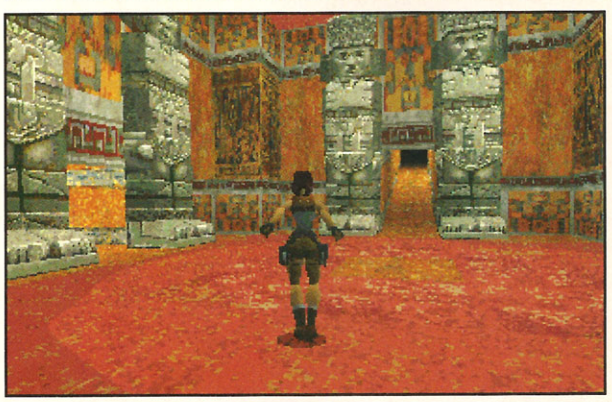
From the edge of the second level ledge, jump into the nearby cavern. You can bypass the crocodile pit by jumping and catching hold of a rock ledge which runs alongside it, then by moving hand over hand. When you arrive at the Coliseum, jump into the arena, then exit by the left-hand slide down. Operate the two switches in the room, then exit back into the main arena. Find the gate behind the rocks and solve the riddle of the gates and the pressure pads. Exit up to the top of the rock pile, then jump across to the emperor's box. Move the sliding block and operate the switch. Jump back into the arena, back up into the stands, then find one of the three side doors which is now open. Solve the simple problems in each of the three rooms to finally find a key. Return to the emperor's box, nip downstairs for a first aid kit, then back up to use the key which opens the gate.

(Below middle) If you've seen 'Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom' then you'll know what to expect when you start walking up the slope towards that large round ball.

Level 6 – Palace Midas

Climb out of the water and go right up a large flight of stairs to the room containing the four doors with codes above them. The doors are opened by using the code switches on the roof of the central building. Behind the northern code door there are three slots to hold gold bars. First you must collect a lead bar from behind the »











(Above) There is no easy way around this one – you're going to get a hot foot no matter how you play it. Just remember to take a spare first aid kit with you and be prepared to use it with one hand while hanging off a pillar with the other!

(Right) It's been hard going up to now, so why not take time out to cool off and have a relaxing dip in the crocodile-infested waters of Neptune's bathroom?

« three other doors. Take the bars to the garden and jump up onto the roof of the building where the first aid box can be seen. A passage leads from here to the Hand of Midas. Use the lead bars on the hand to change them into gold.

Tips: behind the door with the flaming torches you can use a first aid kit whilst hanging from the pillars to regain your strength. This way you can survive the fire damage that you'll suffer as you jump from pillar to pillar across the room. Ignore the cage doors under the water, they are red herrings.

In the room with the T-shaped water canal, find the lead bar by jumping across the chasm to where the first aid kit is, then swing hand over hand to the left to find a ledge beneath you. From here you can jump back across the gorge and find the passage leading to the lead bar which rests on the roof of a palace.

Level 7B – Cistern

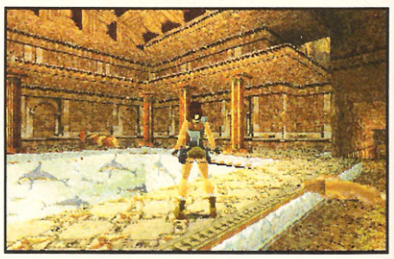
When you reach the large central room, shoot the crocodiles in the pool before jumping down. This level requires you to find two rusty keys, each of which opens a door on the left side of the main area. There is a lever which floods the central room, allowing you to reach places previously unreachable, but you must not flood the area until you have been through the first rusty door on the left and obtained the silver key.

One rusty key is on a high ledge in the central area which needs you to go hand over hand along a small ridge to reach it. The second rusty key is found after you flood the main area and then dive in what was the crocodile pool to find the small passageway through. This rusty key will lead to the second silver key and the gold one. The two silver keys open the main door out of this main area. Use the gold key next and then pull a block to exit the level.

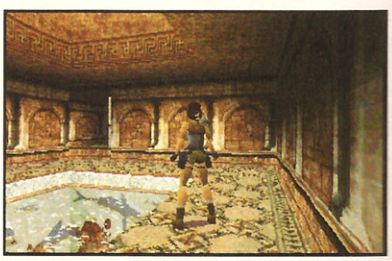
Tip: there is a set of magnum pistols to be found on a high ledge in the room behind the first rusty door. They are on the far wall, middle ledge.

We'll be back next month with the second half of this terrific game, so until then remember to keep your toes out of the crocodile pools and don't go climbing onto any high ledges without a save game in your tights. Z













(Bottom right) It's a long way down, but don't worry – the drop won't hurt you. It's that sudden stop at the bottom that does all of the damage!

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BUYERS' GUIDE

Subdivided by genre

C = Classic R = Recommended P = Pants

R = reviewed (issue number)
PD = playable demo on cover (Issue number)
RD = rolling demo on cover disk (Issue number)
LE = level editor
T = tips or solution (Issue number)

Welcome to the PC Zone Buyers' Guide. Over the next few pages you'll find every game we've reviewed over the last 12 months, as well as those we feel should go down in gaming history as Classics.

ACTION

ABSOLUTE ZERO 70
Domark, £39.99
Sub-standard *Wing Commander* clone which needs loads of HD space.
R36 PD36

ALIEN TRILOGY 79
Acclaim, £39.95
Popular PSX first-person shooter that, for all its light-sourcing, is somewhat dated, repetitive and too easy compared to *Quake*.
R16 PD16

C **ARCHIMEDEAN DYNASTY 92**
Blue Byte, £44.99
An underwater mercenary combat game, sort of like *Wing Commander IV* with submarines (and without hugely expensive FMV sequences). Interesting mission structures, a good plot, and proper underwater currents to deal with, all in gorgeous true 3D. Think 'Stingray' (but without 'Aqua' Marina and Peter Lorre).
R16 PD16

ASSAULT RIGS 78
Psygnosis, £34.99
Playable but rather formulaic PSX-converted platform game in a tank. Network options.
R39



R **BATTLE ARENA TOSHINDEN 83**
FunSoft, £34.99
Pretty good PlayStation conversion of a good-looking beat 'em up which runs well without a 3D accelerator card. The gameplay itself is a bit too fireball-orientated, but if you must have it...
R10 PD37

BLAM! MACHINEHEAD 77
EIDOS, £39.99
Another PSX-converted, first-person shooty thing, this time with you strapped to a hovering nuclear warhead. Playable enough.
R16

BUBBLE BOBBLE 80
Acclaim/Taito, £29.95
The retro mania continues apace with this re-release of *Bubble Bobble* and *Rainbow Islands*. Arcade perfect, with cute music and lots of cakes...
R15

C **CANNON FODDER 90**
Virgin Interactive, £24.99
Great fun, this one. Action-orientated forerunner to the likes of *Command & Conquer* and *Z*.
R14 PD13, 28 T18, 37

CAPTAIN QUASAR 73
The 3DO Company, £39.95
Incredibly repetitive, isometric viewed shoot 'em up that was popular on the 3DO.
R15

R **CHAOS ENGINE 80**
Renegade, £32.99
Multi-directional scrolling, top-down, manic shoot 'em up action.
R20 T21

C **CRUSADER 91**
Origin/Electronic Arts, £49.99
Action, adventure, problem-solving, strategy and people getting their heads blown off all rolled into one in this isometric-viewed, futuristic shoot 'em up.
R33 T38, 39 T16



R **CYBERIA 2 80**
Interplay, £44.95
If you liked the first game, you'll like this. Your quest (just for a change) is to save the world via the usual mix of arcade shooty bits and crap 'adventure' bits.
R41

C **DARK FORCES 95**
LucasArts/Virgin, £54.99
Wonderfully atmospheric *Doom*-isation of 'Star Wars' that many people preferred to *Doom* itself. Great graphics, tricky puzzles, true 3D levels and stirring tunes and you get to shoot the heads off of Imperial Stormtroopers.
R24 PD25, 29 T27

C **DESCENT 2 90**
Interplay, £39.99
Hardened Descenders will find enough to test them, but there's a learning curve for newcomers too. New weapons, monsters and great sound effects, plus 'Capture the Flag' team games. Great stuff.
R37 PD37 T41

DESERT STRIKE 78
Gremlin, £34.99
Playable but rather ropey conversion of Megadrive's strategic 'copter shoot 'em up.
R20 T10



C **DOOM 96**
iD Software, £29.99
Surely we don't need to tell you about this one? If you're still after levels for it though, we had 130 on Issue 17's cover disk, 500+ on Issue 21's, and about the same on Issue 25's. And it's free on Issue 28's. See also *Ultimate Doom*, below.
R13, PD28, LE15 T12, 19

C **DUKE NUKEM 3D 93**
US Gold, £44.99
A *Doom*-clone that actually manages to be more inventive and entertaining than the original. Full registered version has some cool new weapons and nastier enemies, a level designer, and the facility to convert *Doom*-WADS into *Duke* maps. It's funny, too.
R10 PD11 T38, 39 42

EXTREME GAMES 70
Psygnosis, £29.99
PSX-converted trendy-sports combat racing game that plods even on a P133.
R37

C **FADE TO BLACK 94**
Electronic Arts, £44.99
The follow-up to *Flashback* – outstanding graphics, fancy spinny-aroundy polygon bits, and a level of difficulty that's up there with licking your own anus. Has all the elements of the original – and it's in 3D!
R31

FINAL DOOM 62
GT Interactive, £44.95
Last attempt to wring yet more money from any suckers who haven't heard of *Duke Nukem 3D* or *Quake*. The levels are quite good, it sports hi-res and Internet play, and it runs under Windows 95.
R12

FIRESTORM: THUNDERHAWK 2 60
Core Design, £39.99
Below-par helicopter shoot 'em up with pop-up mountains.
R36

R **FLASHBACK 89**
US Gold, £9.99
Beautifully animated platform game with the nightmarishly hard foes and treacherous traps that will do to your tads what a Spanish chef does for a bull's. Varied locations including a killing gameshow but the game isn't easy and the complicated controls only work well with a gamepad.
R6 T7

C **FX FIGHTERS 93**
Philips, £39.99
One of the best 3D beat 'em ups on the PC. Loads of moves, atmospheric graphics and fighters ranging from snappy-limbed insects through pneumatic-breasted women/cat hybrids to giant turd monsters. Cool.
R29 PD30 T31, 32

HERETIC 78
iD/Raven, £39.99
Doom in tights.
R25 PD24 T26



C **HEXEN 94**
iD, £39.99
One stage up from *Doom* in terms of gameplay, it's essentially a simplified RPG with a less linear approach and an improved game engine that lets you look up and down. Great-looking, extremely involving, with an eight-player deathmatch facility.
R33 (booklet)

THE HIVE 78
Funsoft UK, £39.99
Pre-rendered shoot 'em up. *Rebel Assault* without the good bits.
R35 PD35

R **IMPERIAL PURSUIT 80**
LucasArts, £19.99
X-Wing add-on: long, involving, 'story-driven' tour of duty.
R7 T8

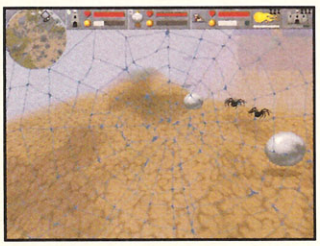
R **INFERNO 88**
Ocean, £44.99
Slick space combat thingy that branches out into sub-aqua combat thingy and even planet surface hovery combat thingy. Cut-scenes, reasonable graphics, fine explosions, booming SFX and pilot aids galore.
R20 PD25

JUNGLE STRIKE 79
Gremlin, £39.99
Follow-up to *Desert Strike*, with more trees.
R26 PD25

R **KLIK 'N' PLAY 88**
Europress, £39.99
It's not a game as such, but a game designer for Windows that lets you make the sort of sick, unpleasant action fests that you've always wanted. Neat, intuitive and fun.
R22

KRAZY IVAN 77
Psygnosis, £39.99
Potentially playable first-person viewed robot-based shoot 'em up let down by limited views and a fiddly control system.
R15 PD15

C MAGIC CARPET 96
Electronic Arts, £44.99
Very good mana-based shoot 'em up that's very hard and gets a bit repetitive after a while, but looks and plays fantastic.
R21 PD22 T26, 39



C MAGIC CARPET 2 92
Electronic Arts, £44.99
Improved version of the first game with new monsters and scary night-time bits. Also comes with a good on-line help mode, and it's a little easier than the original.
R32 PD31 T42

R MAGIC CARPET: HIDDEN WORLDS 80
Bullfrog, £19.99
Add-on levels for *Magic Carpet*, but beware: it's utterly, stupidly, nut-crushingly hard.
R27

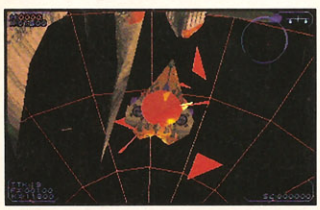
R MECHWARRIOR 2 88
Activision, £49.99
Rarely has stomping around the countryside in a 70-foot armour-plated monster robot, blowing the shit out of anything you take a dislike to and generally running amok been so rewarding, so spiritual, so... healing.
R32 PD32 T34, 36, 41

R MECHWARRIOR 2: MERCENARIES 88
Activision, £44.99
MechWarrior gets a graphical tweak in the form of a bit of texture mapping and proper terrain on some, but not all, levels. And it gets a gameplay tweak by having everything you do (or don't do) be motivated by financial gain rather than all that tedious clan nonsense. Other than that, it's business as usual.
R45

C METALTECH: EARTHSIEGE 2 90
Sierra, £44.99
Equally hard campaign mode, but here the graphics are excellent, the terrain varied and the sound effects stepped up. Which makes it just about the best giant robot game around. Windows 95 only.
R38 PD39

C MORTAL KOMBAT 3 90
GT Interactive, £44.99
The latest version of the much-hyped 'gore-fest', complete with ludicrous cartoon-style blood spatters, fatality, babe-ality and 'friendship' finishing moves if you can work out the multiple button presses. An excellent two-dimensional beat 'em up.
R33 PD33

R THE MUPPET CD-ROM 87
Starwave/Ocean, £39.99
Hilarious outing featuring all your favourite sock-based characters in seven average(ish) arcade/puzzle games which sparkles with Muppet humour. Superb intro sequence.
R11 PD40



C NIHILIST 91
Philips, £39.99
Good-looking shoot 'em up that's basically a first-person viewed *Asteroids*. Loads of variety, with mayhem, retro wire-frame and bizarro pool table levels, and even a bonus sub-game of *Asteroids* itself. Add to this a wide range of network options, a PWEI/Dog Eat Dog soundtrack and an in-game option to play your own CDs, and you have a minor corker.
R13

R PRIMAL RAGE 82
Time Warner Interactive, £39.99
Dinosaur-based beat 'em up in the sideways-on viewed *Streetfighter* mould (except you get to use your teeth a bit more). Good graphics, good gameplay: 'Jurassic Park' for psychopaths.
R32 PD31

R PRINCE OF PERSIA 2 89
Broderbund, £12.99
Dated but nice-looking platform game with pointy shoes and pyjamas.
R5 T6

PRIVATEER 75
Origin, £11.99
Wing Commander-style dogfighting, *Elite*-style trading.
R9 T10



C PRIVATEER 2: THE DARKENING 94
Electronic Arts, £39.99
The follow-up to *Privateer* finally gets some decent, fast and furious interstellar combat *à la X-Wing*. It also gets greatly improved graphics. Add top stars, five million bucks' worth of studio-based acting and an engrossing plot well told and you have the best space combat game ever.
R44

C PRO PINBALL: THE WEB 90
Empire Interactive, £34.99
Extremely realistic and gorgeous-looking game with a stonking soundtrack. There's only one table, but it's feature-packed – you can even nudge it from each side and the bottom. The best pinball experience you can get, short of buying a real Williams table.
R34 PD34

C QUAKE 96
iD Software/GT Interactive, £39.99
Quake?... *Quake*... Nope, it's gone. I can't really remember what this somewhat obscure little number's all about. But apparently it's quite good.
R43 T13

RAVAGE 72
Warner Interactive, £39.99
Run of the mill game-on-rails shoot 'em up that looks lovely but plays ugly, and is too short.
R46

RAYMAN 76
Ubisoft, £39.99
Playable though quickly irritating, unoriginal PSX-converted platform game.
R36

C REBEL ASSAULT 2 90
LucasArts/VIE, £49.99
Gorgeous graphics, good solid gameplay and 'real' live action footage combine to make another thoroughly enjoyable, pre-rendered shoot 'em up experience for *Star Wars* fans. It even has a corker of a storyline.
R34 PD17, 29, 37

RESURRECTION: RISE 2 73
Acclaim/Mirage, £44.99
Nicks some ideas from other beat 'em ups and again looks nice, but still falls short.
R37

R RISE OF THE TRIAD 82
US Gold, £9.99
One of the better *Doom*-alikes, but nowadays that's a bit like being one of the better *Pong* machine-alikes.
R26 PD26 T26

R ROAD RASH 95 84
Electronic Arts, £34.99
The motorbike-based beat 'em up finally makes it to the PC in Win95 form and turns out to be surprisingly good. It's hardly original in concept, but it's well put together and a good laugh. And it's got a link-up mode to bludgeon your friends.
R44

R ROBOTRON X 80
GT Interactive, £39.95
It's *Robotron X*, Jim – but not as we know it. Better graphics, swirly camerawork, but exactly the same gameplay. Run about, shooting wildly at thousands and thousands of robots in an enclosed, claustrophobic arena. Then do it again. And again. And again. A good modernisation of a classic game – but dashed repetitive.
R45 PD46

R SCORCHED PLANET 82
Virgin, £44.99
First-person viewed shoot 'em up that has you piloting a morphable hovery jet-cum-tank thing through eight levels, subdivided into three stages each. Intuitive controls, lightning-fast gameplay (in lo-res) and nasty enemies combine to make it one of the more action-packed and enjoyable blasters around.
R44

SHATTERED STEEL 71
Interplay, £39.99
Yet another HERC-based stomper that proves to be just a little dull in the long term.
R46 PD43

R SLIPSTREAM 5000 88
Gremlin Interactive, £9.99 (Budget)
Hovery racing game that's rather like the much-hyped *Wipeout* except it runs at a good speed, is very playable with PC controllers, and costs a whole heap less.
R27 T34

S.T.O.R.M. 70
Electronic Arts, £39.99
Scramble lookalike that's pretty but much too hard.
R38

STRIFE 70
Velocity/3DO, £39.99
You can talk to people in it. And it uses the old *Doom* engi zzzzz.
R43

R SWIV 3D 85
SCI, £39.99
The Amiga, SNES and MegaDrive classic gets a three-dimensional upgrade *à la Magic Carpet*, and a *Desert Strike* on amphetamines approach. It's very fast, and very hard, even with power-ups that enhance your weapons to the point where you'd worry about the safety of the planet if you had any conscience at all. Luckily, you don't.
R45 PD45

R TEMPEST 2000 85
Atari, £29.99
A 15-year-old Atari game gets a techno soundtrack and suddenly words like 'arcade classic' are being bandied around the office.
R37

R TERMINAL VELOCITY 80
US Gold, £12.99
The first of Apogee's *3D Realms* games. Fly about in an anti-gravity sort of way, shooting everything in sight on the *Magic Carpet*-like levels; find the exit tunnel, warp to the next level; continue until bored.
R30 PD31 T29, 30

R TERMINATOR: FUTURE SHOCK 85
VIE, £39.99
Shoot 'em up based on the first 'Terminator' film with full freedom of movement in a true 3D world. Look up and down (or die), drive cars, blow the shit out of terminators, robots and flying ships and get lost in the enormous war-torn levels.
R35 PD34 T10

C TERRA NOVA 90
Virgin, £39.99
Stomping-about-in-robot-suits, shooting-the-crap-out-of-stuff game from the people behind *System Shock*. In fact, the game plays like *System Shock Outdoors*. Complex controls and less than stunning sound effects and graphics, but it's very enjoyable nonetheless.
R39 PD38

R TIME COMMANDO 86
Electronic Arts, £44.99
Classy-looking computer-rendered beat/hack/stab/shoot 'em up with nice backgrounds and lots of walking-about bits in which you get whisked to different eras in time to find something that may or may not be some kind of weird computer virus thing. We may never know. But you're dying to find out, aren't you?
R12 PD41



C TIE FIGHTER 94
Virgin Interactive, £49.99
Follow-up to *X-Wing* stuffed with loads of new features and more importantly, the chance to succumb to the Dark Side, dress up in some really cool plastic uniforms and shoot the nuts off that arsehole Luke Skywalker. If that's not overstating things.
R18 PD29 T19, 20 21

TIE FIGHTER: DEFENDER OF THE EMPIRE 73
LucasArts, £19.99
Two new missions and a missile gunboat.
R24

R TILT 80
Virgin Interactive, £34.99
Another of the thousands of pinball games available to people with itchy flipper fingers and no loose change. There are six tables to choose from, and a variety of ways to view them, but it doesn't have the depth of gameplay provided by *Pro Pinball: The Web*.
R34 PD34

C TOMB RAIDER 95
Core Design, £44.95
A *Prince of Persia*-style platform game with a superb 3D engine that has something for everyone: the aforementioned platform action, tricky puzzles, scary things attacking you and a good storyline. There are also shitloads of animals to shoot for Royal readers, prodigious feats of leaping about for gymnastics fans, and underwater sections for Patrick Duffy fans. And the main character's a chick with large triangular gazongas.
R45 RD45 PD46

TOTAL MANIA 68
Eidos Interactive/Domark, £39.99
X-COM/Crusader hybrid that looks nice but will bore your arse off in the long term.
R41 PD41

C ULTIMATE DOOM 90
GT Interactive, £29.99
Doom with an extra episode. Buy Issue 30 and get it for free.
R29 Free upgrade pack 30 T40

»

VIRTUA COP 78
Sega, £39.99
Addictive, mouse-driven conversion of the arcade hit that just doesn't have enough to it long term.
R46 PD16

VIRTUA FIGHTER PC 79
Sega PC, £29.99
Same game, but doesn't need the accelerator card and markedly slower as a result.
R42 PD41

C **WILLIAMS ARCADE CLASSICS 90**
GT Interactive, £29.99
If you really want to use your million-dollar multimedia Pentium to play conversions of prehistoric arcade games that have all the graphical sophistication of a drawing by Stevie Wonder, then this is probably the compilation for you. Arcade-perfect versions of *Defender*, *Robotron 2084*, *Stargate Defender 2*, *Joust*, *Bubbles* and *Sinistar*. Classic 80s arcade action.
R34 PD Any shareware distributor

R **WING COMMANDER IV 85**
Origin/Electronic Arts, £44.95
The filmed sequences with real sets and proper actors cost over $8M to make, and it shows. A genuinely absorbing plot with a strong storyline provides the most complete cinematic gaming experience to date. Sadly, the gameplay bit is less impressive and nor it advanced since the last version. You'll also need a seriously meaty PC to run it.
R35

R **WITCHAVEN 88**
US Gold, £29.99
Doom-style hack 'em up. No firing spells from a safe distance here; it's hand-to-hand combat all the way. Midway between *Heretic* and *Ultima Underworld* (but better than *Heretic*). Fast, ferocious, and very bloody
R33 PD33 T35, 36

WITCHAVEN 2 72
US Gold, £29.99
More like an add-on disk than a sequel.
R40

C **X-WING 90**
LucasArts, £44.95
Excellent 'Star Wars'-based space combat game that spawned a myriad offshoots.
R2 PD17, 29 T1

ADVENTURE

ACE VENTURA 72
7th Level, £TBA
Slick point-and-click adventure, possibly aimed at kids.
R46

C **ALONE IN THE DARK 3 95**
Infogrames, £34.99 (compilation)
AITD 3 was supposedly the last in the trilogy, except that *Time Gate* could easily be *AITD 4*. Available as a budget compilation containing all three *AITD* games – and given the difficulty level, this gives you approximately five years of gameplay for your money. Barg-ola!
R21, 23 PD24 T27

C **AZRAEL'S TEAR 90**
Mindscape, £44.99
Atmospheric blend of two first-person viewed classics, *Ultima Underworld* and *System Shock*, with yet another Knights Templar theme. Engaging, tricky, but very rewarding.
R39 PD38 T15, 46

R **BEAVIS AND BUTT-HEAD 87**
Viacom New Media, £39.99
Point-and-click adventure featuring all the regular characters from the series. Snappy and amusing dialogue, some unusual sub-games and plenty of puzzle-solving for adventure game traditionalists. Cool, huh?
R35 PD35

C **BIOFORGE 95**
Electronic Arts, £44.99
Stunning-looking, action-packed adventure game with built-in unarmed (and armed) combat entirely free of charge. Extremely difficult, its tension derives from the race against time scenario.
R25 PD26 T28

R **BURN:CYCLE 85**
Phillips, £44.99
One of the better interactive movie-type adventures. Good pacing, a sharp plot and plenty of variety in the gameplay. Wins Most Unlikely Use Of A Colon In Game Title award.
R32

R **BROKEN SWORD 84**
Virgin Interactive, £44.99
'Interactive cartoon' from the team who brought you *Beneath A Steel Sky*. Gameplay tends toward lengthy conversations thanks to an icon-based speech interface which doesn't allow you to phrase questions yourself. Gorgeous scenery, and well worth a look – more than a match for many of the FMV interactive movies around.
R12

CHRONICLES OF THE SWORD 68
Psygnosis, £39.99
Boring puzzler set in the time of King Arthur.
R39

DAGGERFALL 65
Virgin Interactive/Bethesda, £44.95
Ambitious yet flawed try at an open-ended D&D jobbie, that ends up just being a jobbie.
R43

R **DAY OF THE TENTACLE 87**
LucasArts, £39.99
A very taxing adventure with very American humour which isn't quite up to the standard of the classic LucasArts offerings.
R7 PD17 T7

R **THE DIG 87**
LucasArts/VIE, £44.99
A return to the good old days of classic point-and-click adventures for LucasArts, although it doesn't actually reach the heights of *Indiana Jones*, *Monkey Island* or *Sam And Max*. A good, involving story, a fair amount of atmosphere, and it's not too difficult to get through.
R34 PD32 T37

C **DISCWORLD 96**
Psygnosis, £49.99
A staggeringly high score for this very difficult adventure game based around the books of Terry Pratchett. It's funny, if you like the boy Pratchett's humour, extremely entertaining – and very, very hard.
R22 PD23 T30, 44



C **DISCWORLD II 93**
Psygnosis, £44.99
This sprawly sequel is one of the best adventure games around, based loosely around Pratchett's books 'Mort' and 'Reaper Man'. Unlike the first game, you won't find yourself wandering around endlessly, lost and stuck, because they've lowered the difficulty to a more manageable level. It's still challenging, as well as enjoyable and funny, with the gameplay heavily influenced by classics like *Monkey Island*.
R44 PD44

C **ECSTATICA 93**
Psygnosis, £44.99
Alone In The Dark-style gameplay with ellipsoid-generated characters, no inventory and a far higher pert buttocks-count. Difficult, with some tricky puzzles, and the constant running away can be wearing until you get some serious pointy weaponry.
R21 T24

C **FULL THROTTLE 92**
LucasArts/Virgin, £44.99
Main biker-guy has a voice so deep it makes Lee Marvin sound like John Inman. Sadly, it has a god-awful sub-*Road Rash* arcade beat 'em up on bikes bit in the middle which spoils the flow of the whole thing. Apart from that, it's a cool point-and-clicker.
R27 PD26 T29

C **GABRIEL KNIGHT 90**
Sierra On-Line, £44.99
Tim Curry does the voice for the hero in a louche camp style in this tense, some would say brooding, atmospheric thriller.
R14 T32

R **GABRIEL KNIGHT 2: THE BEAST WITHIN 88**
Sierra, £44.99
Well-acted FMV-based interactive movie with a complex plot that actually has a fair bit of gameplay, although it's not the hardest game you'll ever come across.
R36 T39, 40

R **THE GENE MACHINE 87**
Vic Tokai, £44.99
Pleasant point-and-clicker in the stye of the LucasArts classics, except that it's British. Nice backdrops, an interesting HG Wells/Jules Verne storyline set in the 19th Century, and humour that will make you smile. Puzzles may be a tad easy for rock-hard adventurers, but still enjoyable.
R41

R **HARVESTER 83**
Virgin Interactive, £39.99
Despite lorry-loads of FMV footage, *Harvester* provides plenty of traditional, old-fashioned adventurey gameplay. Those with sensitive stomachs may find it all a bit gore-tastic; the politically correct may object to voyeuristic shots of a chick hanging around in suspenders and undies; those who don't care either way will find proper puzzles, an involving plot, and interesting sub-plots.
R12



C **INDIANA JONES AND THE FATE OF ATLANTIS 93**
LucasArts, £12.99
Budget, all-talkie version of one of the best adventures ever made. Three ways to play, depending on how hard you want to think, whether you like an occasional bout of fisticuffs, or whether you want a bit of help from your lippy, sidekick Sophia.
R37 (budget)

R **INDIANA JONES AND HIS DESKTOP ADVENTURES 80**
LucasArts, £39.99
Weird desktop adventure game-cum Windows 'toy' that you can load whenever you want to try your hand at a number of mini-puzzles featuring the eponymous whip-wielder.
R41 PD10

R **KINGDOM O'MAGIC 82**
SCI, £44.99
Point-and-click adventure that can be amusing at times, but would have been better without the stereotypical minorities and the huge-breasted chick.
R38 PD38 T41

C **KING'S QUEST VII 93**
Sierra, £44.99
Excellent adventure game with some mind-boggling puzzles, marred only by the fact that everyone, even the supposedly evil ogres, tries to be cuter than Hathaway out of 'ER's top lip.
R24 T32

R **KYRANDIA 3 87**
Virgin, £29.99
Good quality adventure, now available as part of the Westwood Studios 10th Anniversary Pack, along with the first two games (*Legend Of Kyrandia*, *Hand Of Fate*) and *Dune II* and *Lands Of Lore*. Well worth 30 quid.
R23, 40 (compilation) T26

LEISURE SUIT LARRY 7: LOVE FOR SAIL 79
Sierra, £44.99
If you like looking at cartoon breasts and sitting through some of the worst jokes in the history of mankind, this is the game for you.
R46 PD43

LIGHTHOUSE 80
Sierra, £39.95
Myst-style adventure that starts off normal and gets very weird very quickly, with baby-napping demons and suchlike. Very ponderous and puzzle-based, it's ponderous and tricky. So avoid it if you're stupid and impatient. That means you, Paul Gascoigne...
R45



C **LITTLE BIG ADVENTURE 93**
Electronic Arts, £44.99
Pretty-looking, gorgeously animated, isometrically-viewed adventure. Quite hard and the auto-save feature can be a pain in the arse, but worth investing some time in.
R21

R **MUPPET TREASURE ISLAND 80**
Activision, £34.99
Another top title featuring the only loveable creatures ever to be based on underwear. This time it's a point-and-click adventure inspired by their latest film, aimed squarely at children. However, the blend of video and sumptuous hand-drawn backgrounds, easy-to-follow adventures and humorous sub-games will charm adults as much.
R44 PD46

THE NEVERHOOD 79
DreamWorks Interactive, £49.99
Simplistic point-and-click adventure with linear structure and plasticine characters.
R45

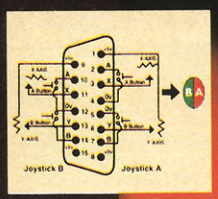
C **NORMALITY 90**
Gremlin Interactive, £44.99
Ambitious point-and-clicker with first-person viewpoint that can drone on a bit at times but has its fans in the office. The hero's a bit of a dork, but at least it's trying something new.
R38 PD36



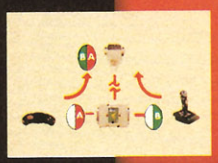
C **THE PANDORA DIRECTIVE 92**
Virgin/Access, £44.95
The nice-looking follow-up to *Under A Killing*

Alfa Twin

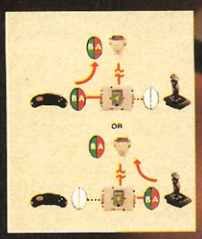
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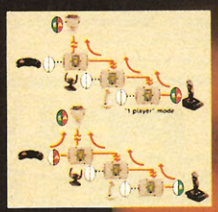
Although most PCs have only one game port the deisgn actually supports two joysticks (A & B). Advanced sticks that sport four buttons , throttle and ruddor controls or coolie caps, make use of the second joystick (B) controls. When two sticks are connected only two fire buttons per stick are available.



In two player mode, both joysticks can be activated at the same time for two-player-games. However, due to the design of the IBM joystick port, the advanced functions of the joysticks are not supported.



Select single player mode and the AlfaTwin allows you to switch between two joysticks. In this mode, all the functions of the stick are supported. To select your stick, simply press the fire button of the controller you wish to use.



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PC FORMAT GOLD

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Edu Oskam ,Technical Support Specialist
(Gravis Europe/Holland)

International Press comment on AlfaTwin:

England

PC Format
"This is an auto-switch and two-player adapter for any two 15-pin controllers.. In auto-switch mode all the advanced controlls, such as hats, are available. It costs less than 20 pounds."
(Gold-award, September 1996)

CD ROM Today
"There is no need to install drivers or fiddle around inside your machine - it is almost too simple...AlfaTwin does its job and adds a whole new dimenesion to gaming. Very useful..."
(Best Buy, June 1995)

PC Review
"As well as helping you enjoy unbridled two player action you can plug in two different styles of joystick and cunningly flip between them."
(September 1996.)

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*GP500 is also known as F1 Sim

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AMERICAN EXPRESS VISA

Moon features the same private dick hero, and is an engrossing, FMV-based adventure with decent puzzles and an absorbing plot. And as there are three different paths through the game, it's VFM as well as FMV. It also comes with a novel based on the game, which, if you read it first (and apparently it's quite good) will spoil it completely.

R13

PHANTASMAGORIA 50
Sierra, £49.99
Interactive movie that forgot the interactive bit.

R19

R POLICE QUEST IV: OPEN SEASON 80
Sierra On-Line, £44.99
Another in the long line of procedurally-based cop games. Walk about, take notes, eat doughnuts, beat Rodney King to a bloody pulp. It's all in a day's work at LAPD HQ.

R19 T15

R POLICE QUEST: SWAT 83
Sierra, £49.99
If you wanna make it as a SWAT Team member, ya gotta practice. And practice. And practice. Gun-toting cop fun, still procedurally heavy but only needs light-gun compatibility to make it perfect.

R36

R PRISONER OF ICE 88
Infogrames, £44.95
The second in Infogrames' Cthulhu-based series of adventures; follow up to *Shadow Of The Comet*. Good plot, good atmosphere.

R29 PD31

R QUEST FOR FAME 80
IBM, £49.95
This music biz-based adventure uses Aerosmith's music and has you playing your way from obscurity to megastardom, using a plastic plectrum you can strum on a tennis racket, a spaghetti strainer or even your partner's pubic hair, if you want. Strum well enough to succeed and you'll end up playing with Aerosmith themselves...

R35

R ROBINSON'S REQUIEM 85
Prism, £19.99 (Addictive compilation)
Original but flawed survival game in which you utilise your wits, your huge range of prescription drugs and your hand-to-hand combat skills. The only game ever to give you the option to amputate your own limbs.

R16

C SAM AND MAX HIT THE ROAD 93
US Gold, £12.99 (budget)
An all-time high point in point-and-click adventures. You control the eponymous heroes (a dog and rabbit Freelance Police team) in their pursuit of Trixie the Giraffe-Necked Girl who's been abducted from a freak show. All-talkie with a funny script and a good mix of puzzles. LucasArts at its very best: an essential purchase at this price.

R11, 16 PD17 T13, 14, 32

SANTA FE MYSTERIES: THE ELK MOON MURDER 72
Activision, £44.95
Superior multimedia murder-mystery fun centring around a Native American community.

R44

R SERPENT ISLE: ULTIMA VII PART 2 89
Origin, £34.99
Origin's flair for storytelling and atmosphere makes this a corker of an RPG.

R3 T5

R SHADOW OF THE COMET 88
Virgin White Label, £12.99
Decent all-talkie adventure based on HP Lovecraft's 'Cult Of The Cthulu' books. A case of involving storyline winning out over less than top-notch presentation, but despite the odd fault Lovecraft fans will love it.

R18, 38 T5, 6, 7

R SIMON THE SORCEROR 2 84
AdventureSoft, £29.99
Simon the Ginger-Haired, Pony-Tailed Foppy Sorceror (to give him his full title) returns with DMs and another batch of smart-arsed jokes. Chris Barrie-less (as if anyone cares), it's still a good all-talkie point-and-clicker. Now available in a budget package with the prequel and a free (disgusting) T-shirt.

R30 T10, 32, 46

C SPYCRAFT 91
Activision, £49.99
Win95-only 'spy simulator'. Unfortunately free of fast cars, birds in swimsuits and spectacular stunts, but loads of FMV and chocka with puzzles, spy satellites, decoding routines and original features. Engrossing.

R38

C STAR TREK TNG: A FINAL UNITY 94
MicroProse, £49.99
There are shitloads of 'Star Trek' adventure games, but this one is the best. If you like sticking a pasty on your forehead and prancing about with your trousers tucked in your chelsea boots, this is the one for you.

R27 PD27 T31, 32

THREE SKULLS OF THE TOLTECS 70
Revistronic/Warner, £39.95
Point-and-clicker with tedious conversations, crap jokes and very low difficulty level.

R15

R TIME GATE 84
Infogrames, £44.99
From the team that brought you the *Alone In The Dark* series comes a game that looks remarkably like *AITD*. Knights Templar-based fun, with all the joys and faults – of *AITD*s 1-3.

R36 PD36 T38

C TOONSTRUCK 93
Virgin Interactive, £44.99
A *Sam and Max*-style comedy adventure, which, despite revolving around the hackneyed idea of a comic artist being sucked into his own creations, turns out to be very good. There's a steadily increasing difficulty level that's pitched just right, a good interface, and large dollops of humour to help you on your way. And the real actor/cartoon background interaction is absolutely seamless.

R15

C ULTIMA UNDERWORLD 2: LABYRINTH OF WORLDS 94
Origin, £44.95
Superb first-person viewed adventure that's never been matched.

R1 T2, 3, 4, 20

ZORK NEMESIS 65
Activision, £44.99
Return To Zork follow-up abandons gameplay entirely and opts for a *Myst*-like approach.

R39

DRIVING

R BIG RED RACING 87
Domark, £9.99
Like a first-person perspective *Micro Machines*, it has you hairing about in different wacky vehicles (snow ploughs, monster trucks etc) – and you can even recreate 'The Italian Job' in a mini.

R37 PD40

P DAYTONA USA 20
Sega, £39.95
It was disappointing on the Saturn. It's even worse on the PC.

R16

C DESTRUCTION DERBY 90
Sony Interactive, £44.99
A cross between a racing game and smash 'em up where you chalk up more points for wrecking opponents' cars than for winning a race. Great graphics and initially exhilarating, but one-player gameplay isn't the deepest you'll ever find. Plenty of network options, though.

R33 PD34 T38, 43



R DESTRUCTION DERBY 2 86
Psygnosis, £45.99
This year's version of the popular ram-raiding sim is better all-round: the wider tracks offer better racing, have jump ramps and alternative routes; there are improved graphics and more areas of the car to fly off into the crowd; more spectacular collisions and stunts; and, most importantly, a much better one-player option. But the network mode will apparently be on a data disk, and there are a fair few better driving games around this year – hence the lower score.

R16

R F1 GRAND PRIX MANAGER 85
MicroProse, £44.99
Comprehensive simulation that has you hanging from your Ron Dennis 'standing up' frame and managing a Formula 1 team through an on-going Championship, taking charge of everything from trying to organise tyre deals and team sponsorship to the hiring and firing of prima-donna drivers. Could be F1 anorak – sorry, shell suit – heaven.

R34 PD38

R F1 MANAGER 89
Europress, £39.99
For the F1 anorak for whom *F1 Grand Prix Manager* isn't quite painstakingly detailed enough. The emphasis is even more heavily biased towards the resources side of things, so you'll be up to your ears in balance sheets, regulations, sponsors, statistics and merchandising, as well as R&D, design, assembly and, oh yes, racing.

R44

C FORMULA 1 GRAND PRIX 92
MicroProse, £14.99
The classic F1 racing game, now available in a number of compilations or on its own. Still great after all these years.

T1

C FORMULA 1 GRAND PRIX 2 95
MicroProse, £30.00
Superb upgrade to the classic racing game with menus and set-up screens to tinker about with to your heart's content, and the game engine is unmatched. To get the textured graphics in all their glory you'll need a decent Pentium, but it still looks good and is playable in low-res.

R36

R FATAL RACING 88
Gremlin Interactive, £39.99
Full-contact arcade driving game like a cross between *Ridge Racer* and the ancient Amiga classic, *Stunt Car Racer*. Excellent graphics and 16 tracks, some of which are spectacular. Unfortunately, it looks crap on anything less than a Pentium.

R32 RD33

R HI-OCTANE 83
Bullfrog, £19.99
Anti-gravity racing game based on the *Magic Carpet* engine with lots of shooting of opponents, but a disconcertingly short view ahead of your car/truck/hovery thing (just as in *Magic Carpet*, in fact).

R29 PD29

C INDYCAR RACING 93
Virgin Interactive, £9.99 (b)
Definitive simulation of the art of racing about in circles with almost all the same ingredients as the sequel; now available on budget in a number of compilations or on its own for a tenner.

R10 RD10

C INDYCAR RACING EXPANSION PACK 94
Virgin Interactive, £17.99
Five excellent extra tracks (and one more roundabout). Of course, it would have been nice if they'd been in the original game.

R19

C INDYCAR 2 90
Papyrus/Virgin, £34.99
Follow-up to the first oval circuit racing game which really doesn't add much. It does have glorious SVGA graphics, but if you already have *Indycar 1*, there's little reason to buy this. Get *F1GP2* instead.

R34 PD34, 43

MEGARACE 2 79
Mindscape, £44.95
An improvement on the original (which isn't hard) but there are loads of better driving games around – and they aren't 'on rails'.

R43

C MICRO MACHINES 2 93
Codemasters, £44.99
Brilliant sequel with different tracks and the same instant appeal. Also comes with a nifty little track designer.

R29 PD29

MONSTER TRUCK MADNESS 78
Microsoft, £44.99
Good, fun racing game in trucks with tyres the size of Pluto. Part *Stunt Cart Racer*, part *NASCAR Racing*.

R41 PD15

R NASCAR RACING 84
Virgin, £44.99
Roundabout racing in armour-plated saloon cars from the people who brought you *IndyCar*.

R23 PD22

C NASCAR RACING 2 92
Sierra, £TBC
Excellent upgrade to an excellent game: car set-ups are all on one screen, and navigating through a race weekend is easier; there's SVGA everything, but the 3D engine has been improved so that it runs a lot more smoothly than its predecessor; the cars are more controllable, making it a lot more playable. And it's a lot more atmospheric, thanks to the steady stream of messages in your headset from your pitside observer. There are also IPX network options, or modem and serial links for multi-player fun. But it's a heavyweight sim: if you want arcade fun, go elsewhere.

R16 PD15

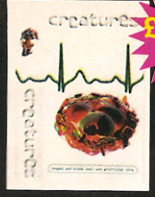
R THE NEED FOR SPEED 89
Electronic Arts, £44.99
Race extremely expensive cars down the longest stretches of highway in America without a turn-off, skid about to leave rubber on the road, crash spectacularly... then do it all again. Or look at the multimeeja bits, showing how obscenely expensive your car really is. 3DO-style crash and burn action comes to the PC.

R31 PD31 T10



C NETWORK Q RAC RALLY 94
Europress, £39.99
Absolutely superb driving game that oozes atmosphere like a running sore in a heatwave. Every stage of the eponymous rally has been lovingly re-created, allowing you to drive like a maniac down single-track roads into blind corners with the best of them. Great stuff.

R44 PD44



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C SCREAMER 2 93
Virgin Interactive, £39.95
For its sequel, *Screamer* abandons trying to do a *Ridge Racer* in favour of doing a *Sega Rally*, and manages it very well. It's very fast, chocka with trackside detail and has more tracks and options than the first game, with four different championships to play through. More arcadey than *Network Q RAC Rally*, but without the longevity.
R15 PD16

R SUPERKARTS 82
Virgin Interactive, £29.99 (budget compilation)
The PC's attempt at a *Super Mario Kart* clone, now available (with *IndyCar Racing* and *F1GP 1*) on the White Lines compilation. You get fast-moving, arcade action all the way, complete with a network option.
R24 PD19

R TEAM F1 88
Electronic Arts, £39.99
F1 management game that's even more comprehensive than *F1GP Manager*. Starting from scratch, you are responsible for everything from bank loans, R&D, sponsors, wind tunnel and engine testing through to office expansion, manufacturing contracts and industrial espionage. Overall it's a bit fiddly and confusing, especially as it's played against the clock, but ultimately worth the slog.
R42

WIPEOUT 78
Sony Interactive, £44.99
Ineffectual and disappointing conversion of top PlayStation anti-gravity racing game.
R34

PUZZLES

THE SEVENTH GUEST 60
Trilobyte, £44.99
Gorgeous-looking puzzle game with weak gameplay in the style of *Myst*.
R4

THE 11TH HOUR 67
Trilobyte/VIE, £49.99
Follow-up to *The 7th Guest* with more puzzles in fancy settings.
R35



C BAKU BAKU ANIMAL 90
Sega PC, £29.99
Sega's PC boys finally come good in a big way with the coolest puzzle game around. *Tetris* or *Puyo Puyo*-style gameplay has you matching up cutesy animals and their food to clear the screen. Great fun in single-player, with a fab two-player single-screen option and a rather excellent kicking soundtrack.
R42 PD45

LEMMINGS 3D 71
Psygnosis, £39.99
Same game, different angle.
R31 PD29

MONTY PYTHON AND THE HOLY GRAIL 69
7th Level, £39.99
Mildly diverting, if over-familiar, puzzle-based interactive picture book of the film. Sort of.
R12

MYST 67
Electronic Arts, £44.99
Puzzle game set amid pretty backdrops. Mac owners like it.
R15 RD16 T17

SIMULATION

C AH-64D LONGBOW 90
Electronic Arts, £44.99
Great-looking chopper sim with good music and a great interface that tries to be a game. Be warned: even on a P133 it can go all jerk-o in hi-res, and it needs 97MB hard disk space. And there's no network play either. But it looks and plays fab.
R10

R AIR POWER 84
Mindscape, £44.99
Another flight sim set in a parallel universe from Rowan, combining the wars-type aircraft with a fantasy strategy game in which you have to use planes, launched from airships, to take over the country.
R30 PD31



C APACHE LONGBOW 96
Digital Integration, £39.99
The best helicopter flight model around – which means it's remarkably easy to roast your bony ass in a collision with Mother Earth. Nothing comes close to matching it for authenticity, tactical planning and spot-on handling, but if it's arcade thrills and spills you want, go for *Comanche vs Werewolf*.
R31 PD30

R ARMORED FIST 86
US Gold/Novalogic, £12.99
The good-looking, sophisticated tank sim that sounds like a very scary sex aid. *Comanche* on wheels. Er, tracks.
R22

C ATF 92
Electronic Arts, £44.99
Take a seriously spruced-up *US Navy Fighters* engine combined with a large number of 'conceptual' planes with different flight models; add an interactive reference guide courtesy of *Jane's* and a complex mission-building option and you get a seriously good flight sim for propeller-heads everywhere.
R38

C COMANCHE 90
Novalogic, £29.99
Great-looking arcade chopper action. Now available on *World Of Combat* budget compilation, with *Armored Fist* and *Wolfpack*.
R16 T6, 44

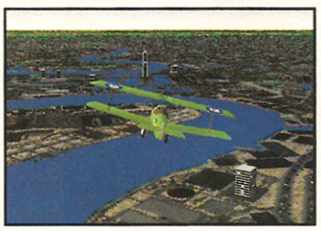
R COMANCHE VS WEREWOLF 88
Novalogic/US Gold, £39.99
Take the original *Comanche* chopper game, then chuck in all the add-on missions and a completely new extra game which lets you play two-player modem or serial link-up battles. Not the best flight model around, snooty propeller-head purists will sneer, but it's a good arcade blast with excellent graphics.
R33

R DAWN PATROL 80
Empire Interactive, £44.99
Nice-looking WWI flight sim that lays claim to being an 'interactive book'. Meaning, you sit through loads of garbage between dogfights.
R21 PD21

C EF2000 97
Ocean/DID, £49.99
The flight sim with something for everyone, from complex missions in an on-going war scenario to jump-right-in-and-start-blasting arcade thrills. Based on a plane that isn't even finished yet, the flight model's so good they're using it to train pilots.
R31 PD32

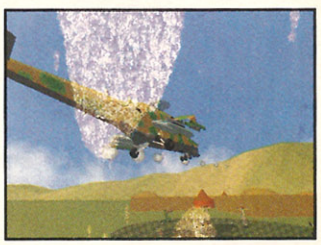
C F-22 LIGHTNING II 90
NovaLogic, £45.99
The first NovaLogic flight sim not to use VoxelSpace technology is also the first to introduce a little intelligence into their usual arcadey approach. The terrain graphics are unmatched, other planes look great and the sound effects are loud and effective. There's also a nice mission builder – but no multi-player options. The flight model and approach seem to be 'I want to be liked' – some think it's a bit easy. Which makes it the perfect 'My First Flight Sim'.
R45

R FAST ATTACK 86
Sierra, £39.99
Ultra-complex but extremely rewarding Windows 95-only submarine simulation. Newcomers to the genre might find the gameplay a bit too much of a nightmare to deal with.
R39



C FLIGHT SIM 95 95
Microsoft, £48.99
The inevitable appearance of a Windows 95 version of the ever-popular sim that actually teaches you to fly gets a big thumbs up. Good graphics, the chance to sit in the dark at home, fly around the world and land on the M4.
R41

R HORNET NAVAL STRIKE FIGHTER 80
Spectrum Holobyte, £44.99
Electronic Battlefield System (EBS) add-on for *Falcon 3*, allowing you to fly eponymous plane in network scraps or standalone missions.
R15



C HIND 90
Digital Integration, £44.99
It's from DI, so you already know it's going to be a seriously heavy simulation. The emphasis is on hyper-realism rather than presentation so it will run on low-spec machines, but it's harder than juggling atoms. Loads of multiplay options though so you can die among friends.
R40

HORNET NAVAL STRIKE FIGHTER 80
Spectrum Holobyte, £44.99
Electronic Battlefield System (EBS) add-on for *Falcon 3*, allowing you to fly eponymous plane in network scraps or standalone missions.
R15

R KA-50 HOKUM 85
Virgin, £39.99
Excellent helicopter flight sim based around the ubiquitous, extremely effective Russian chopper. Very realistic and therefore very hard to fly properly.
R20

GERMANS.



WOULDN'T YOU LIKE TO GIVE THEM ALL A BLOODY GOOD HIDING?

RED ALERT
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COMMAND & CONQUER
Westwood

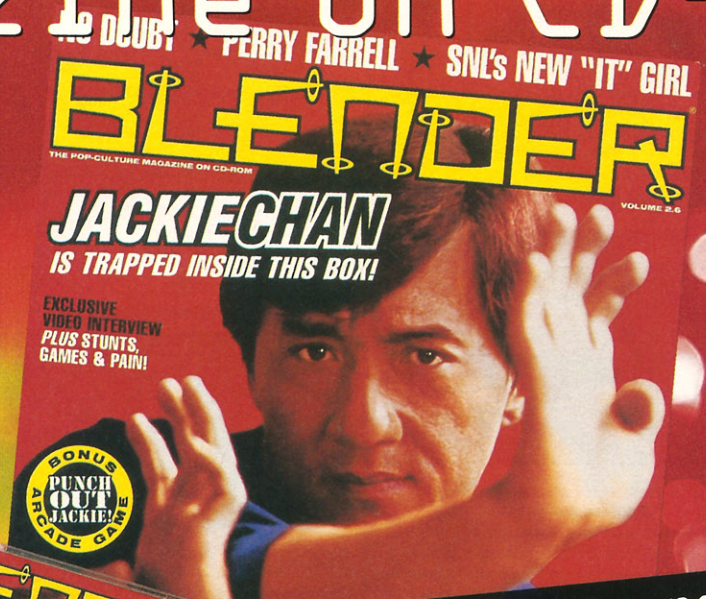
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The interactive pop culture magazine on CD-ROM!!!

New to the UK

"Funky graphics complement trendy music/lifestyle content... a spiky editorial slant and a few surprises". Esquire

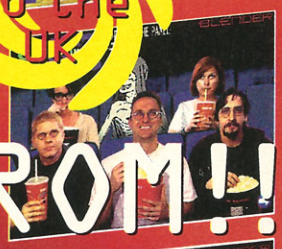
"Blender, the first mainstream youth mag on CD-ROM provides hours of fun: interviews with the celebs actually talking; music... and film reviews". Time Out

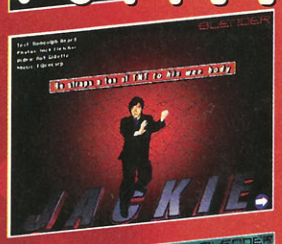


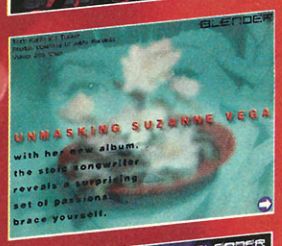


Music, films, computer games reviews

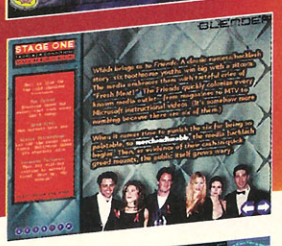




















In this issue...

- Jackie Chan: Profile of the world reknown martial arts director/stuntman; features movie clips, out-takes, video interview. Also Blender staff re-enact one of his scenes and a Punch-Out Game in which the viewer can actually fight Jackie.
- History of Dance Music/Mixology 101: The most comprehensive breakdown of any genre of music in Blender's history; loaded with ever changing music tracks and video interviews; everything from disco to ambient to house to punk to Ilbient to acid house to trip house etc....
- Blender gets one of Suzanne Vega's few interviews with her latest release; talking about her old and new music from her career..
- Backlash: How the media changes its feelings about pop-culture icons over time, specifically the popular American TV show Friends; featuring an "interactive hate machine"- what failures the 6 stars of the show might come.
- PLUS: Loads of reviews - games, films, and music.

SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS:

Windows
MCP2 strongly recommended
Windows 3.1 (or later) with DOS 6.2 (or later)
486 or Pentium PC required
4 Megabytes FREE RAM (6 recommended)
Sound Card (Most modules)
13" VGA or SVGA monitor
Quicktime 2.02 for Windows (supplied)
CD-ROM drive (double speed or better recommended)

Macintosh
Macintosh System 7
68030 processor required
60040 or better strongly recommended
4 Megabytes FREE RAM (6 recommended)
13" colour screen (256 colour)
Quicktime 2.0 + Apple Multimedia Tuner (supplied)
CD-ROM drive (double speed or better recommended)

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BLENDER

Virgin MEGASTORE

Dennis A Dennis Publication

It all adds up to 6 hours of engrossing entertainment

NAVY STRIKE 90
Empire Interactive, £44.99
Two games in one: a flight sim, where you pilot a jet fighter in the slightly scary future, and a military command sim. Very atmospheric, it's one that grows on you the more you play it.
R33 T38

SEA WOLF 83
Electronic Arts, £44.99
Hugely atmospheric submarine sim with a control interface from hell.
R15

SILENT HUNTER 90
SSI/Mindscape, £39.99
Superb WWII sub sim that's got the lot: cat-and-mouse stuff, creaking hulls, big explosions, depth charge attacks, blokes in chunky polo-neck sweaters...
R40

STRIKE COMMANDER 65
Electronic Arts, £11.99
Some brilliant bits: cinematic sequences, amazing graphics and sound, varied missions. And some unbrilliant bits: flying isn't as good as the plot stuff and it's sluggish.
R3, 9, 13 T5



SU27 FLANKER 95
Electronic Arts, £11.99
Comprehensive flight sim based on the scariest aircraft ever built. Features the best flight model around, developed with input from top Russian pilots, but has less than dazzling graphics. Aimed at serious propeller-heads rather than those seeking lightweight thrills and spills (the instrument panels are even in Cyrillic script). No network or serial-link multiplay options, but a better simulation than *EF2000*, *MiG29* or *Tornado*.
R34 PD33

TFX 80
Ocean, £44.99
Near-future flight sim with graphics and sound that still stand up today.
R15 T12, 16, 34

TOP GUN 92
Mindscape, £44.99
An outstanding flight simulation with a cinematic storyline and loads of atmosphere, it's let down slightly by misleading views and a hi-res frame rate on a P133 like a supertanker performing a U-turn. Still good, though.
R37 PD38 40



TORNADO 93
Digital Integration, £44.99
Still some kind of benchmark for an in-depth flight sim, *Tornado* is so deep you'll need a bathysphere. Low-level attack sim with excellent ground visuals that's definitely not for beginners.
R6

US NAVY FIGHTERS 90
Electronic Arts, £44.99
One of the best-looking, most accurate flight sims around, lacking only a multiplayer facility.
R22 PD23

US MARINE FIGHTERS 92
Electronic Arts, £19.99
Add-on disk for *US Navy Fighters*, featuring US and Yank Harriers, Yaks, the Russian supersonic Harrier rival and a gunship version of a Hercules transport plane. Great stuff, but still no network mode.
R30

WINGS OF GLORY 78
Electronic Arts, £44.99
Very playable and good-looking WWI flight sim with tendency towards jerkovision.
R24 PD25

SPORT

ACTUA SOCCER 92
Gremlin Interactive, £34.99
Arcade action featuring all the major national teams (and Wales). Excellent graphics, thanks to a 3D polygonised pitch arrangement and more camera angles than a BBC costume drama. And despite one or two large faults in the gameplay, it's still the best of a poor bunch of PC footy games.
R34 RD34 PD35 T13

CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER 2 92
Domark, £44.99
The finest football management game ever made. Every team in England, thousands of players from all over the world, minutely adjustable playing styles and formations. The only management game where you feel that what you're doing has an effect.
R31 T38, 46

CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER 2 DATA DISKS 92
Domark, £9.99
The French, German and Italian leagues of last season, all on one disk.

EURO 96 70
Gremlin, £29.99
Or *Actua Soccer Again*. Not enough to warrant another full-price game.
R41

FIFA SOCCER 97 86
Electronic Arts, £39.99
The vest version of *FIFA* to date features a nifty build-your-own-dream-team option, more leagues and teams than ever before, a database facility to play multiple leagues, and many improvements in the gameplay, including the ability to pass into space (gasp). And the players don't take over too much any more (at least not at the hardest level). There's even a new indoor game. It's harder, though, so if you struggled with previous versions, you won't exactly shine in this. And the perfect football game's still a long way off on the PC...
R16 PD46

FRONT PAGE SPORTS BASEBALL 85
Dynamix/Sierra, £44.99
Nicks all the best features from all the other baseball games around and combines them, to make the best of its kind around. It comes out every year with different features.
R22

FRONT PAGE SPORTS FOOTBALL PRO 85
Dynamix/Sierra, £44.99
The best American football game on the PC, combining a superb play-designer, great graphics, multiple camera angles and good arcade action.
R9

HYPERBLADE 80
Activision, £TBA
In the world of the sports game, 'futuristic' is usually a code word for 'shite', with very few exceptions. This is one of them – a fast, playable and very violent sort of ice-hockey-with-sabres thing. Unfortunately, it has no two-player-on-one-machine option, and it's very power hungry (P90/16MB minimum), or it would have scored even higher.
R16 PD45

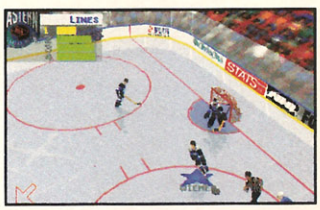
IAN BOTHAM INTERNATIONAL CRICKET 70
Beam, £34.99
Good, playable conversion of SNES hit, with unnecessary and crap FMV footage.
R37

INTERNATIONAL RUGBY LEAGUE 78
Electronic Arts, £39.99
Final outing for EA's old, isometric *FIFA* engine. Playable enough, if you practise.
R16

LINKS LS 94
EIDOS Interactive, £44.95
The long-awaited re-vamp to the world's greatest golf sim gives you more gameplay options, even more gorgeous graphics and a re-designed menu and view-selection system, making it better than ever. Includes a built-in upgrader for all the old data-disk courses you spent your wodge on in the past.
R13

MADDEN NFL 97 87
Electronic Arts, £39.95
This, the first incarnation of *Madden* on the PC for about six years, finally provides the sort of quality now taken for granted on the consoles, and so becomes the best American footy game on the PC.
R41 PD45

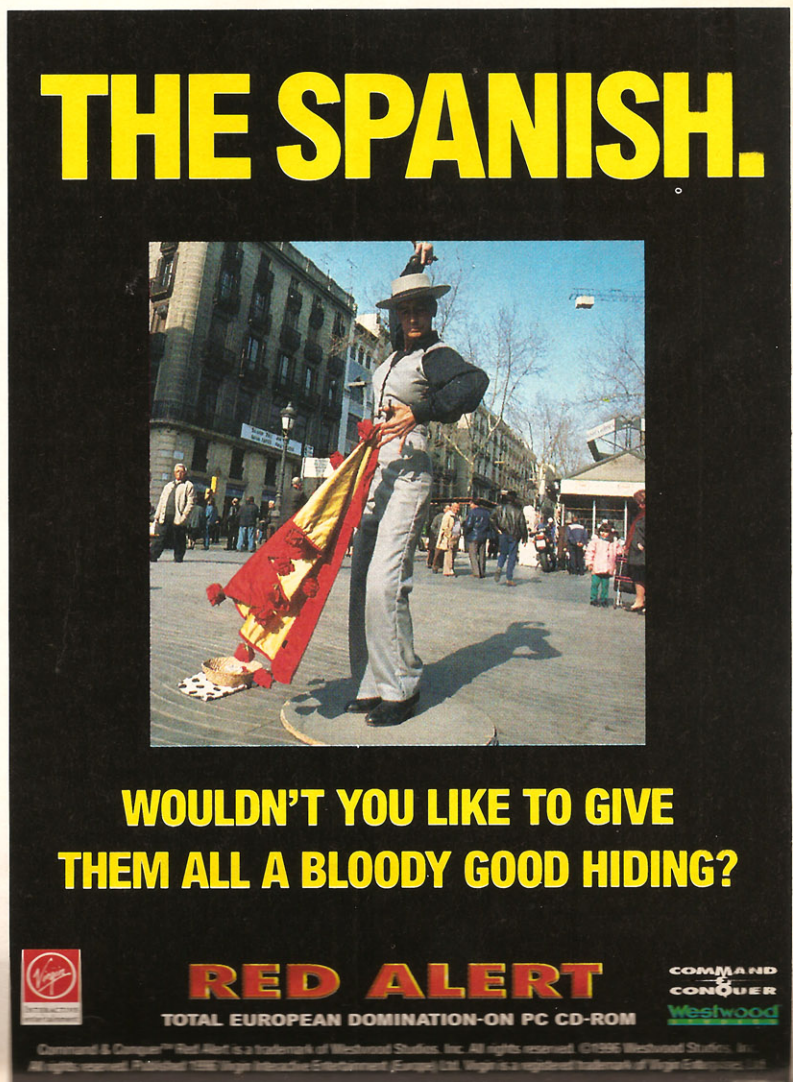
NBA LIVE 96 85
EA, £44.99
Basketball gets the Virtual Stadium treatment: multiple angles for each camera, an expanded polystyrene crowd, three levels of difficulty and all the usual season play options. A bit muted graphically, and can be confusing when it gets crowded.
R37

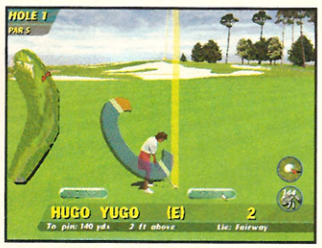


NHL HOCKEY 97 90
Electronic Arts, £44.95
This year's release gets a handful of national sides thrown in (but it's rather patronising on the Scandinavian front) and the usual graphical tweaks. This time it's big close-ups of the refs picking up the pucks and whizzing about – hardly an essential element. But if you don't have an ice hockey game, this is the one to get. If you have one of these already, don't bother. Unless you absolutely must have the most recently completed season's statistics and teams.
R45

OVERLORD 85
Virgin Interactive, £39.99
Second world war flight sim based around – you guessed it *Operation Overlord* (also known as the D-Day landings). Features mainly ground attack missions with the odd dogfight or bomber intercept, has two padlock views (count 'em) and some decent flight models.
R17

PGA TOUR GOLF 486 91
Electronic Arts, £19.99 (budget compilation)
Not only excellent-looking but also great-playing, fine-smelling golf game, which is available in the *Essential Collections: Sport* compilation along with *FIFA Soccer* and *Formula 1 Grand Prix*.
R20





C PGA TOUR '96 94
Electronic Arts, £44.99
There are two different courses on offer this time, and new *Links*-inspired windows that provide extra views of all the action. The main view graphics now look slightly less sharp than last year's model but at the same time give more sense of depth. If you're not that bothered about having the latest version, last year's game is cheaper, has more courses and loses absolutely nothing in gameplay.

R32 PD37 T13

C PGA EUROPEAN TOUR 94
Electronic Arts, £44.99
Finally, a game featuring the peoplewho actually won the Ryder Cup competition rather than the also-rans. A different development team has tweaked the ball physics so it responds better to the contours of the ground, which makes it the best arcade golf game. And it's Yank-free.

R38

R SWOS 96/97 80
Time Warner, £29.99
Also available as a £9.99 upgrade if you still have your original *SWOS*, this is basically a tweak disk. The squads are up-to-the-minute. There are new features, many of which you wouldn't notice if you weren't told what they were (like your players performing headers standing still) and one or two additional 'management' features. It's hardly state-of-the-art, but it takes you back to when playability was the prime concern in football games.

R46

R TNN BASS TOURNAMENT 80
Electronic Arts, £39.99
Fishing tournament game that's more to do with amassing money than the joy of hooking big floppy gilled things. *Trophy Bass* is better. The Save the Whale people rather like this, allegedly. So it's not that popular in Japan...

R39

R TROPHY BASS 85
Sierra, £39.99
Near-perfect simulation of the noble art, concerned more with the purity of thought and deed than the baser elements of money-grabbing tournaments. Comes with a voucher for a free bag of chips and a sachet of vinegar.

R39

R ULTIMATE SOCCER MANAGER 2 80
Sierra, £39.95
Ultimate Soccer Manager 2 takes *Premier Manager* and quadruples it, dumping so much stuff on you to control that it almost creeps out of the realms of being a football management game entirely. Ground and property development, burger, beer and restaurant prices and sponsorship are just some of things you'll find yourself fretting over, as well as the footbally stuff like tactics, formations and set-piece moves. The ratings aren't that real, and it's no *Championship Manager*, but *Premier Manager* fans will like it.

R45 PD45

C VIRTUAL POOL 91
Interplay, £44.99
Superbly implemented pool sim with intuitive controls and a multi-player network option. As close to real pool as you can get, apart from the little piles of coins on the side of the table. (And only 90 times the price.)

R28 PD27

STRATEGY

R ACROSS THE RHINE 86
MicroProse, £44.99
Tank-based battle strategy game which takes a while to come to terms with thanks to a heavy-duty manual and a less-than-intuitive multi-view interface. Great depth if you can get your head round it.

R30

R AFTERLIFE 88
Virgin/LucasArts, £44.99
God game modelled on *Sim City* in which you actually play God, 'zoning' areas of punishment and reward for the souls who come under your charge. Liberal helpings of humour, along with good longevity in the gameplay, mean you don't have to be Billy Graham to enjoy it either.

R40 PD39

R AIV NETWORKS 80
Infogrames, £44.99
A business sim that throws you in at the deep end of corporation management. Not nearly as easy to get into as the Maxis titles, unless you're a budding mover and shaker who doesn't do lunch.

R30

R ALIEN LEGACY 80
Sierra On-Line, £39.99
Another of the several million space strategy games vying for your dosh, but one of the better ones. A bit like a cheaper version of *Outpost* without the pretty bits. Daunting at first, but becomes addictive.

R20 T20

R ALLIED GENERAL 83
SSI/Mindscape, £44.99
Windows 95-based follow-up to the hugely successful *Panzer General* that should appeal to wargamers and casual dilettantes alike. One or two faults, but its simplicity should appeal.

R37 PD38



C ASCENDANCY 93
Virgin, £39.99
Take all the bits you loved from just about every strategy, god or warfare game, set it in the context of space exploration and planetary conquest, and you get *Ascendancy*. Get stuck into this and you can kiss goodbye to your social life, career and an acceptable level of personal hygiene.

R32

R BATTLEGROUND ARDENNES 84
Empire Interactive, £40.00
Serious and deep, deep strategy game that's the first to be designed exclusively for Windows 95. Dragging war games into the 90s? Whatever next? Good graphics?

R35 PD34

R BATTLEGROUND GETTYSBERG 87
Empire Interactive, £39.99
Second in the Windows 95-based series. An excellent feel for the Gettysberg battles, complete with QuickTime movies and a Quick Start guide, but it needs 130mb of hard disk space for a full installation, or 60mb for a minimum. Which is quite a lot.

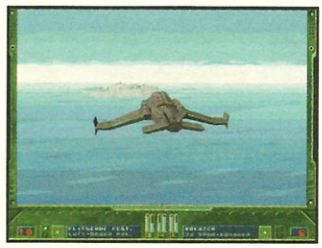
R37 PD39

BATTLEGROUND SHILOH 78
Empire Interactive, £44.99
Another flawed attempt to bring computer wargames and tabletop miniature together.

R45

BATTLEGROUND WATERLOO 74
Empire Interactive, £39.99
Third in the series, with more views and unit types, but dumber AI. And still no scenario editor.

R42 PD46



C BATTLE ISLE 3: SHADOW OF THE EMPEROR 93
Blue Byte, £45.99
Third in the series of highly respected and very popular strategic battle games. Worth checking out if you like your strategy with a futuristic bent (ie your army jumper has silver patches on the elbows and shoulders).

R33 PD36

R BEDLAM 89
Mirage, £34.99
Take a range of isometrically viewed city levels, and add a dinky little armoured HERC, with more weapons of destruction at its disposal than the average aircraft carrier, and you have a highly addictive blasterama that's like *Syndicate* for the impatient, with weapon power-ups rather than an R&D team.

R43 PD42

BLOOD & MAGIC 71
Interplay, £39.99
Command & Conquer wannabe with magic, that's slightly less exciting than watching newspaper yellow.

R46 PD46



C CIVILIZATION II 90
MicroProse, £44.99
Enhanced sequel in full 3D which can make things cluttered at times, especially if you have a number of windows open. Combat's been tightened up, with new units and 'hit points', and even experienced *Civ* players will find there's a lot to learn. (Note: Windows 95 or 3.1 with WinG only.)

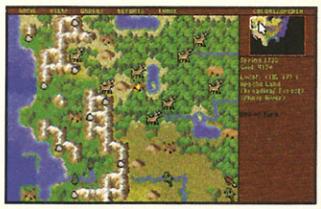
R36 PD40 T43, 46

R CLOSE COMBAT 84
Microsoft, £44.99
A wargame that started out trying to be like the Avalon Hill boardgame *Squad Leader*, but ended up as something else entirely, *Close Combat* is like a sort of top-down viewed, realistic *Command & Conquer*. Based around the exploits of the US 29th Infantry Division in Normandy, it's a historically accurate, tactical combat simulation that may be the first in a new generation of real-time, super-realistic sims.

R45

R CYBERJUDAS 80
Empire Interactive, £39.99
Political strategy game in which you play the President of the United States (no, not the band), complete with an interface that lets you access every country in the world. Set up trade agreements, negotiate peace settlements, track down traitors in your midst, or just shag beauty queens.

R41



C COLONIZATION 90
MicroProse, £44.99
Civilization I with more depth and better graphics, released to make a quick buck until *Civ 2* appeared. Allegedly.

R20 T24, 37

C COMMAND & CONQUER 95
Virgin, £44.99
Take the strategy and resource management of *Dune 2*, add the fast-paced, real-time combat of *Cannon Fodder*, intelligent grunts, a myriad weapons, and the exploration elements of *Civilization* and you have a hugely addictive game.

R28 LP36 PD37 T38, 42

R COMMAND & CONQUER: COVERT OPERATIONS 84
Virgin, £14.99
Seriously difficult add-on missions for anyone who thinks they're a bit of a *C&C* whizz.

R38 T41

CONQUEST OF THE NEW WORLD 75
Interplay, £44.99
Slow, cumbersome strategy game about... well, conquering the New World.

R39 PD36



C CREATURES 94
Warner Interactive, £29.99
We had to put this here because we don't really have an 'artificial life experiment' section. Maybe it's time we started. Anyway, this is the thing that's had boffins, programmers, social commentators and suchlike spurting into their underwear. Basically you raise, nurture and breed a race of artifical animals, teach them tricks and even a language, and breed from them to produce (hopefully) more advanced creatures. The more care you put into their development, the more interesting it gets and the more things they achieve, until in the end they're probably cleverer than you are. Much like parenthood, really. Astonishing stuff. And you can even trade them over the internet.

R45

R CYBERSTORM 85
Sierra, £44.95
Interesting turn-based space exploration game with a *Dune*-ish plot, with you building robots to mine ore from different planets in competition with other companies.

R43

R DUNE 82
Virgin, £44.95
Adventure/strategy mix that has you, Paul Atreides, setting up a spice mining op on Arrakis and attacking the evil Harknnens.

R7

R DUNE II 89
Virgin, £34.99
Excellent real-time strategy game. Take one of the three tribes of Arrakis and struggle to beat the others until your mouse finger is a blood-soaked mess. The forerunner to the magnificent *Command & Conquer*. Available on *Power, Corruption and Lies* compilation.

R1 T2

escape

ELECTRONIC ENTERTAINMENT FOR MEN

–a load of Bullocks



Inside issue 2

E-mails of the rich and famous
Fancy sending Sandra Bullock a pic of your underpants? Or redirecting all your junk e-mail to Jeremy Beadle? You need escape's definitive guide to celebrity e-mail addresses…

Plus:
How many times have you heard a guy claim video games are better than sex? We get our hands on a portable cardiac monitoring machine and put our best man on the job

- Escape locks Ron Atkinson in the changing room with footie simulation *Championship Manager 2*
- Swingers love the Web because it's a great way to meet, like minded people. Our intrepid reporter checks it out
- Four women, four Internet virgins… until now. Escape introduces them to the Web and stands well back
- The best stocking fillers this side of Cindy Crawford
- On-line soap operas
- Snowboarding on the Net
- The best-selling sex CD-ROM of all time
- Other stuff we'll think of at 2am on Saturday morning a week before the deadline

Issue 2 on sale Thursday 5th December

In WH Smith, Menzies and all good newsagents. If you can't see it, ask.

C FANTASY GENERAL 92
SSI/Mindscape, £44.99
The third in the series uses the same combat and movement engine as *Panzer* and *Allied General*, but it's the most exciting wargame (if that's not an oxymoron) so far.
R39 PD37

FRAGILE ALLEGIANCE 68
Gremlin Interactive, £44.99
Yet another asteroid-based mining, resource management space exploration thing. Strangely for a mining game, it lacks depth.
R16

C FRONTIER: ELITE II 95
Gametek, £39.99
Classic open-ended space trading game that lets you be anything you want.
R9

FRONTIER: FIRST ENCOUNTERS 78
Gametek, £39.99
Enhanced version of *Elite II*, bugged to jiggery.
R28

C GEARHEADS 90
Philips Media, £29.99
If we had a Weird category, this would be in it. It's a Windows 95-only sort of strategy/action game in which you set fighting wind-up toys against each other in an attempt to get them to the other side of the playing area. Surprisingly addictive.
R40 PD38



C GENE WARS 91
Electronic Arts/Bullfrog, £39.99
Has you competing against intelligent alien life-forms to produce an efficient food chain by selective breeding, under the watchful eye of some all-powerful superior beings who don't like dirty tricks. So you have to wait until they're not watching to set your mutants on the enemy. The winner gets to live. Very frenetic and very complicated.
R44

R THE HORDE 87
US Gold, £44.99
Slightly weird strategy game in which you try to develop and run a village, while waiting for the regular attacks by hideous, ravening monsters. A bit like being a pub landlord around here, really.
R16 PD16

R MACHIAVELLI THE PRINCE 89
MicroProse, £44.99 (now on budget)
Colonization-style strategy game packed to the eyebrows with assassinations, plagues, pirates and intrigue. Get caught in bed with an underage boy! Sell guns to terrorists and get away with it! Well, the historical equivalent, anyway.
R28



C MASTER OF ORION 2 92
Microprose, £44.95
The world's most complicated space conquest strategy game has been updated, and it's as sophisticated as ever. Don't even think about buying this if you have no patience, or expect to find a quick answer to taking over the universe – we're talking several hours of gameplay just to get your bearings. There are more things to research than any other game of its type, and the game changes in scope the further into it you get. Extremely rewarding and very addictive. Kiss real life goodbye.
R15

R M.A.X 83
Interplay, £44.99
Combines old-fashioned turn-based strategy and resource management, in the usual global domination kinda way, with this year's essential element, real-time combat. And does it very well, too, with the potential to develop anything from ships and planes to tanks and spies, and all in lovely SVGA-o-rama. Has a pronouced strategic slant, though. (Pronounced 'strategic slant'.) (© Spike Milligan, 1955.)
R16 PD15

R PERFECT GENERAL 82
Mirage Software, £44.99
Just one of the many thousands of playable and engrossing hex-based wargames waiting to take you in their big, comfortable arms and protect you for the rest of your days, you huge hunk of man, you.
R29

R RISK 82
Hasbro Interactive, £39.99
The computer version of the best-selling board game that can permanently divide lifelong friends overnight. As well as a 'classic' version (ie. straight board-game replica), it has an enhanced version, with loads of little features to make the whole thing more computer-friendly (you can take POWS to bargain with, there are five different game maps, different terrain, etc). And you can play over a network or modem. But it doesn't have real-time combat, which is disappointing.
R16



C SETTLERS 2 92
Blue Byte, £39.99
A whole range of improvements in this sequel, including a new interface, more varied gameplay and far, far bigger levels. Frighteningly addictive.
R41 PD40

C SIM CITY 90
Maxis, £9.99
The original game that spawned a monster, it now looks really ropey and everyone has a copy of it somewhere.
R20 T22

C SIM CITY 2000 92
Maxis, £39.99
Fully rotatable 3D version of the classic strategy game with far more depth (literally you have to look after stuff underground now, too) and an excellent hierarchical menu system to control it all.
R13 T15

C SPACE HULK 90
Electronic Arts, £11.99
Classic real-time strategy action game with liberal doses of death and destruction, huge gouts of blood and gore, and masses of tension and fear. A bit like *The Generation Game*, really.
R1 16 PD16 T6, 7

C SPACE HULK: VENGEANCE OF THE BLOOD ANGELS 90
Electronic Arts, £49.99
Windows 95 version of the 3DO version, featuring the best missions from the original game, a new campaign, new graphics and sounds and a full 3D engine. Looks fab, but is *extremely* hard.
R40

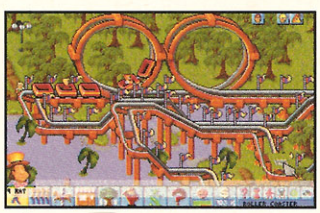
STAR CONTROL 3 75
Time Warner, £39.95
Four years in the making and a huge disappointment, losing much of the stuff that made *SC2* so appealing and concentrating on resource management.
R16

C SYNDICATE PLUS 92
Electronic Arts, £11.99
The classic isometric strategy game for amoral, homicidal maniacs, plus the data disks, plus a network play option.
R17



C SYNDICATE WARS 95
Electronic Arts/Bullfrog, £44.95
The long-awaited update to the classic strategy game is one of the most violent, addictive and fun games on any system, a fiendishly subversive sci-fi extravanganza that's incredibly atmospheric. The more you play it, the better it gets. And there are loads of multi-player options, too.
R43 PD44

R TACOPS 81
Strategic Plus Software, £49.99
Excitement a-bungo and endless tactical possibilities make this basic-looking real-time strategy game a must-have. Includes network play and play-by-mail/e-mail options.
R40 PD40



C THEME PARK 93
Electronic Arts, £19.99
Design and run your own theme park, competing against others for the title of the best in the world. Design rides to make children sick. Force old ladies' hip-bones to pop out of their sockets with the G-force on your roundabout. And other stuff.
R17 T18, 19, 20, 33, 34

R THIS MEANS WAR! 89
MicroProse, £44.99
A futuristic strategic wargame, using elements from both *Command & Conquer* and *Transport Tycoon*. Slower-paced than *C&C*, but engrossing once you've come to grips with the myriad options available.
R35 PD32

C TRANSPORT TYCOON 94
MicroProse, £9.99
Follow-up to *Railroad Tycoon* that has you moving into the world of aeroplanes and buses and stuff. Beautifully designed and thought-out. Excellent, hierarchical drop-down menus, and a playing area that feels about four times the size of *Sim City 2000*'s. One of the best strategy games around. Rush out and buy it.
R21 PD21

C UFO: ENEMY UNKNOWN 93
MicroProse, £34.99
Absolutely top-notch strategy/resource management game with turn-based fighting against nasty big squishy blobby aliens that are quite scary if you screw your eyes up and pretend Rolf Harris did the artwork. Amazingly addictive and compelling, *UFO: Enemy Unknown* spawned the all-conquering sequel, *X-COM*. The game is available on the *Power, Corruption and Lies* compilation, with *Dune 2* and two others.
R15, 16 T16, 18, 33

R WAGES OF WAR 89
3DO, £39.99
Isometric-viewed strategic combat game that puts you in command of a troop of hardcase mercenaries in a post-holocaust world. Turn-based combat and the amount of mission planning involved means it's more suited to the strategy buff than the adrenaline-seeking *C&C* junkie, but the range of actions open to you, varied missions and hardware and good graphics combine to make this a thinking man's skirmish combat dream.
R16

R WARCRAFT 2: TIDES OF DARKNESS 82
Zablac, £44.99
Very addictive and enjoyable sequel, with a good network option and some improved AI and controls.
R36 PD37 T37, 41

WARHAMMER 73
Mindscape, £39.99
Addictive Windows 95 real-time strategy game that's a bit too hard, with fiddly controls.
R37

R WAR WIND 88
SSI/Mindscape, £44.99
Basically, 'it's *Warcraft 2* with knobs on'. *War Wind* is more or less the same game, but there are weirder creatures and loads more specialist units and little extras that give ten times the variety in the gameplay. You don't create units from scratch, but you can buy them and train them up into something else. And there are four widely differing races, which require quite different tactics to succeed, adding to the longevity. If you liked *Warcraft*, you'll definitely like this.
R15

R WORMS 84
Ocean, £34.99
A cross between *Leemings* and *Cannon Fodder* of limited one-player appeal, but brilliant in multi-player mode (up to four can play on a single machine). Turn-based combat revolves around using a variety of destructive weaponry to blow the arses well and truly off your opponents. A great laugh.
R33 PD32 T39

C X-COM: TERROR FROM THE DEEP 94
MicroProse, £44.99
The follow-up to *UFO: Enemy Unknown*, it's another turn-based strategy/combat classic, but this time set underwater, that will have you up till all hours, losing your sleep, job and girlfriend while you fight the jelly-like alien terrors from the... uh... well, deep. Let's hope a future version will include a data disk with free couple therapy.
R26 PD25

C Z 92
Time Warner Interactive, £44.95
Addictive *Command & Conquer*-style game, based on occupation of zoned areas to control weapon-producing factories. As a result, it's more strategic than *C&C*, and lacks the exploration aspect. Network options, entertaining cut scenes and soldiers who feel free to criticise your efforts. And criticise you they will, because it's very, very hard indeed.
R12 T16 PD13, 16



Stuff is the sharp new one-stop guide to anything a man might want to buy – and where to get it.

Stuff reviews the very latest, greatest and wackiest products around, in a fast, funny, jargon-free way.

Don't buy anything until you've bought Stuff.



It's your chance to become an instant expert on anything from buying a multimedia PC to, um, a fruit-flavoured condom. No more jumped up salesmen getting one over on you, eh?

Stuff. For men who don't want to get stuffed.

[ON SALE 14 NOVEMBER]

WORD PROCESSOR

Happy New Year to all our lovely readers. Let's start the new year bright and fresh and get a few things off our chests so that we can face the next three hundred and sixty-odd days with a clear conscience and a strong heart.

TWO-PLAYER TRAUMAS (CONT.)

Dear PC Zone,

In response to the letter from Jeffrey Root in last month's *Word Processor*, I am also finding it annoying that two-player games are not possible using two joypads. I purchased an ACM game card which allows two joypads to be connected at the same time. This seems a bit of a waste as games are not written to cope with two joypads. I'd come to the conclusion that it was not possible to have two joypads used in a game until I purchased Acclaim's *Separation Anxiety*. This was a joy as I could play it with two joypads without any trouble. I sent an e-mail to Playmates Interactive about the possibility of there being a patch that would allow two players to use joypads in *Toshinden*, but was told that only one player could use a joypad. Why can't these companies write programs to cater for two joypads? Acclaim have, so it can't be that difficult. Are these people just plain lazy? I think two-player games that do not allow two joypads should be left on the shelf to teach these companies a lesson. After all, what use is it trying to play a fighting game with the keyboard? None whatsoever, it's absolutely crap, not to mention completely unfair!



Mark Langfield, Worcester

Yes, it is possible to write code that supports more than one gamepad input and you're probably right in thinking that some developers can't be bothered to make sure their game supports two gamepads. We can only hope that as more and more developers start to write for Win95, more games will support multiple inputs. The Microsoft SideWinder Gamepad supports multi-player input and you can daisy-chain up to four of them if it's supported within the game. The Gravis GRiP sports a similar feature, but only works with certain games running under Windows 95. Hopefully, things will improve as time goes on.

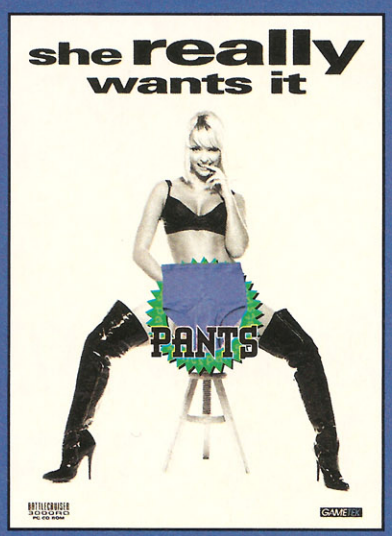
Letter of the month

PLEASE, NEVER MIND THE BOLLOCKS

Dear *PC Zone*,

I've been meaning to write this letter for a long time, but like you do, I kept putting it off. Anyway, here it is, better late than never I s'pose.

Ever since your magazine started to dominate our newsagents's shelves about two years ago *(More like four, but carry on – Ed.)*, I've been a fan. In this time I've had two subscriptions and read every issue from cover to cover. Yet after all this time, there is still one thing that I cannot get to grips with. In just about every issue I've read there has been someone who writes in and whinges about the biggest asset *PC Zone* has. Your unique (and honest) style. Who else would dare to end their *Quake* review with "Fucking brilliant!"? (Even though it is!) And who would dare to put the ad for *Battle Cruiser 3000 AD* on their back cover without drawing stupid knickers on the poor girl? It is things like this that make *PC Zone* the UK's number one games magazine. When your reviewers speak their minds in reviews (for example, *Quake*) it gives us, the readers, a truthful and realistic image of what the game is really like. If you didn't speak your mind, how in hell would we, know what to expect in a game? As for the girly photos that appear in your mag, I personally don't see anything wrong with them, it's only a bit of fun. It's not as if they're particularly explicit or anything, and yet still some people write in and complain.



People have the choice of whether to buy the magazine or not, so they don't really have any grounds to complain if they find something offensive. If they don't like it they don't have to buy the magazine. Please don't get me wrong, sometimes it is appropriate for readers to express their views, but for the worthless whingers who can't stop moaning, leave us, the people who enjoy the mag as it is, to get on and enjoy it?

Yours sincerely,

Otto Hughes, Malton, N. Yorks

Er... Erm. Thanks. Awfully.

QUAKE SET-UP

Dear PC Zone,

I'm a bit of a newcomer to the PC gaming scene, but I'm already a convert. I especially like first-person perspective games – yep, I'm hooked on *Quake*.

However, I tend to have a problem controlling these games. I have tried a number of keyboard combinations and a joystick (utter poo!), but find these too awkward to use. As you are always saying how much easier it is to control *Quake* with the mouse I was wondering if you could enlighten me. Do you use the mouse to look or strafe and the keyboard for the other functions, or what?

I'm sure this will help not only me, but all the other people who aren't quite as talented as Macca. Please reveal your secrets.

Mark Mobley, Bicester, Oxfordshire

Most of the team in the office, and indeed the Gib-meister himself, use the following system, or a variation on it. We like it – it works for us, let's hope it works for you too:

W	Run
S	Run backwards (Have 'run' switched on all the time via the Setup menu)
A	Strafe left
D	Strafe right
Space	Jump/Re-generate
Mouse	Direction
Left mouse button	Fire selected weapon
Right mouse button	Look (hold the right mouse button down and move mouse to 'look' and aim – you can run and do this at the same time).
Number keys	Select Weapon

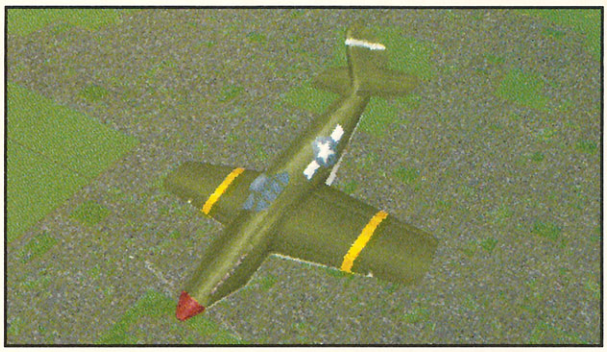
WHERE'S 1943: EUROPEAN AIR WAR?

Dear *PC Zone*,

I have taken this crawling approach to a) get an answer and b) I read in the Jan issue that the Editor is a big bloke... *(Eh...? – Ed.)* Whatever happened to *European Air War*? You ran some news on it way back in May last year and gave us a release date of October. I've checked with the people at PC World, but they say it is still to appear on their release list. Please put all of us flight sim nuts out of our collective miseries and tell us what's happened to it.

Vic Harrington, Lutterworth, Leics

According to publishers MicroProse, 1943: European Air War *is now due for release in March/April. Look out for an update in next month's issue.*



(Above) Yes, it does exist – *1943 European Air War* is coming soon (promise).

PC ZONE ON TV

Dear *PC Zone*,

OH GOD! How sad can you get. I just sat through *Gamesmaster* and to my surprise Macca was on it. Surprising, because I thought he might be dead since he's completely disappeared from the planet *Doom* for the past year. It was such a joke. They had this berk called Michel on who was s'posed to have designed a well 'ard level that even Macca couldn't do. I thought, cool, there'll be rooms full of Shamblers dancing to the Wombles tune while the player is simultaneously crushed by five moving spikey walls. But nope, instead there was a pathetic dribbling of moronic Grunts blindly stumbling around corners only to have their heads instantly blown all over the opposite wall before they had even noticed their own existence. Macca looked as though he was ready for bed by the time he had cacked all over the entire level. Next time he goes on TV with that twat Michel I think we would all like to see a proper fight, with real guns, and whoever wins gets to go home without a frigging *Gamesmaster* Golden Joystick.

Chris Glaister, CIX

Macca is indeed alive and well, and currently thrashing us all at network Quake *every Friday afternoon. He's also stopped smoking, started smoking again and taken up football.*

LET THEM EAT CAKE

Alright you *PC Zone* boys listen up! Your mag's great. *But* before your heads expand to the size of Pamela Anderson's breasts remember it's only because of the effort you put in – *don't* get all 'we're brill lets feck off to the pub' laid back or I'll be forced to shit in an envelope and post you the contents and I will make sure I eat lots of sweetcorn the night before. You have been warned.

Anyway about Chucky Brook's idea to put more cakes in games, it's an ace idea. Imagine playing *Links LS* and every time you get a birdie it rewards you with a vanilla slice, or if in *Syndicate Wars* your agents complete a mission and are rewarded with a large table full of fairy cakes, kind of like a chimp's tea party, but with guns. *Tomb Raider*? Lovely nice legs, big charlies and a nice curvy arse, gameplay? You mean there's a game in there?

Mr Cursor is an arsehole, but where would we be without him? Bored now so I'm going to chase squirrels with a stick around our local park. Remember THE SUN ALWAYS SHINES ON TV.

The Uncle Nasty, CIX

Thanks for what I presume is some kind of thinly veiled praise, we're all very glad that you like the mag. Hopefully, more developers will pick up on the obvious benefits of including cake in their games. Maybe they could start to include secret levels full of cake – the obvious choice is Quake-Cake. *Maybe someone could design a wad full of cakes?*

Tomb Raider *is indeed a truly fantastic game. If you haven't already bought it you're a fool to ya'self! And leave Mr Cursor alone, at least when he puts pen to paper he's funny. And he doesn't quote lyrics from A-ha songs.*



Come on, be honest, would you let this geek loose on TV?

STUCK ON 3D

Dear *PC Zone*,

Ahh... *PC Zone*, you seem to know what you're talking about so here I am, yet another lost soul needing your guidance. So I'll begin by asking:

1) What is the best graphics accelerator currently on the market? I see new adverts all the time saying that 'We're fast and they're not' but what help is that? They only say that 'cos they want *my* money, and that's somit that I don't come by very easily. Can you please tell me just one that is fast with games such as *Tomb Raider* and all the other new 3D bits coming out faster than I can think (well that isn't saying too much).

2) Whereabouts does Culky live in Feltham? He often mentions Feltham Green which is actually just a crappy pond that has so much *crap* in it that I swear that you could walk across it (it's just across the road from my local game store TORC, an excellent place), but I haven't actually seen him around. Well that's all from this waste of carbon.

James Snook, Feltham (!)

This month's cover feature should be enough to convince you that you're going to have to buy a 3D accelerator card of some kind if you want to play games such as Resident Evil, WipeOut 2097 *and* Tomb Raider *(at an extremely hi-res). The PowerVR card is, in our opinion, quite fantastic, but if you still want more info, be sure to check out next month's issue which will feature a detailed round-up of every 3D accelerator card available (or about to be available). We predict that at first it will be software-led, so initially it'll be a case of buying the card that directly supports the certain game(s) that you really want to play, but once an industry standard is set (hopefully via DirectX) then things will be a lot simpler (didn't we all say that before Windows 95 was released?). Also, don't completely rule out Intel's new MMX chipset.*

To answer your Culky query, no one really knows exactly where ole Culkus lives and works. Various people have spotted him working in a chip shop in Fulham, stacking shelves in a supermarket in Milton Keynes and even working as an usherette in an 'adult theatre' in a small town just outside Norwich. Others have said he lives in an ice cream van with Richie Manic under the Hammersmith fly-over, though, sadly, none of these sightings have been backed up with photographic evidence. If you see him, be sure to let us know. And try to get a snap. Z

Write to PC Zone

Send your letters to:

WordProcessor
PC Zone
Dennis Publishing
19 Bolsover Street
London W1P 7HJ

Send your e-mail to:

CompuServe: PC ZONE 100142, 2152
CIX: PCZONE@CIX.compulink.co.uk

Don't forget to check out the *PC Zone* CIX conference if you're on-line.

If your letter is selected as 'Letter of the Month' we'll send you a bundle of T-shirts and maybe even a game. COO!

NB: *PC Zone* retain the right to completely edit, re-write and completely change all correspondence in order to make themsleves appear as smug, funny and witty as possible.

NEW ISSUE



On sale 3 January



COSHA CULK'S CHRISTMAS CLEARANCE! EVERYTHING MUST GO!

(due to annual stock-take, and a certain amount of local flooding)

Dear England,

Alright? Colin here, isn't it.

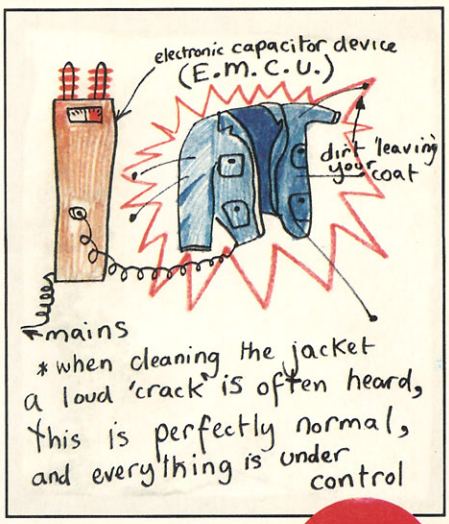
I know Christmas is over and that but, seeing as the sales start soon, I just thought I'd let you get a saw of the 'specials' me and mi dad's got on offer, with immediate availability ripe from our garage... I present our family company... "GIFT-U-GRAB OF FELTHAM"!

Due to warehouse flooding in the Feltham Green area just before Christmas, we can offer the following items. We are only open to personal callers at the garage, and we ain't accepting no credit cards, cheques or unused notes. Only circulating cash is any good, and we ain't bringin' it rand.

All the items shown are modern and high tech, and come with my dad's special 'in-situ' repair guarantee.* He has also sworn a witnessed affidavit declaring he won't nick anything nice of yours he might just happen to see whilst repairing your gift. He will also refrain from drinking more than 85 units of alchohol whilst he's on your premesis, undertaking your repairs. Furthermore, if he, or any other member of the Culk family, can't fix it, we'll 'get' you something else instead. That's the Culky Customer Care promise.

*(If the said article fails to please, or work in such a manner as the box it came in *implies*, just ring Mr Ian Brian Culk, and my dad'll come round to fix it himself, with his own tools, and his own bare hands, right in front of you, in your own house.)

SPANGAX SELF-CLEANING WORKMAN'S DONKEY JACKET



Dirt, tar, oily-slime, sand, kak and other fouls are always a hazard for any builder, wether he's working for the counsel or doing some private, cash-in-hand pavement or road repairs in his 'spare' hours.

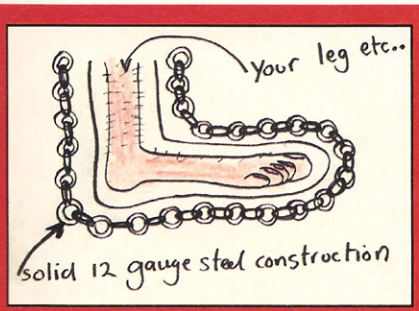
NOT ANY MORE! A leading industrial clothes manufacturer has come up with an engenius way of keeping him clean.

The **SPANGAX SELF-CLEANING DONKEY JACKET** sports four huge pockets, comes in a thick kind of wool stuff, and remarkably cleans itself!!!

The secret is in the Electric Mains Capacitor Unit (E.M.C.U.) supplied with the coat. Simply plug this into the mains before you go to work, and during the day it will charge to an incredible 600,000 volts. Cleaning the garment is then simply a matter of placing it in the safety cage (supplied), then plugging it into the E.M.C.U. with the three-pin plug you'll find at the back of the jacket. Switch the unit on, retire to a safe distance of four metres or so, and you will see dirt and grime electronically 'expelled' from your nice coat in an instant.

GIFT-U-GRAB PRICE £100

"SNOW CHAMPION" STEEL CHAIN SOCKS



Death due to slippage is no longer a threat in those long winter months that see most of us sliding around like drunk parrots.

Snow research done in 23 American states last year proved that snow is:1) Nasty, 2) Very "slippy-slidy", 3) Gets everywhere... then melts right in your face.

Health officials found out that although we can still normaly think properly after we've had a tumble in the snow, too many 'snowy-spills' can spell disaster. But it won't be spelling it like that for much longer.

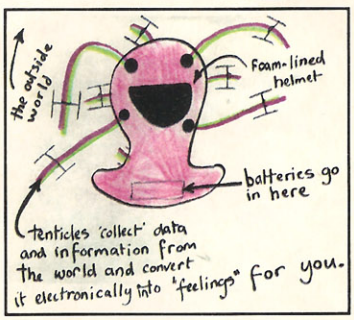
"SNOW CHAMPION" socks are made of 12-gauge steel and fit over your normal socks, just like the tyre chains that help keep millions of Swedish drivers from their deaths each year.

"They're AMAZING," said one happy owner. "A little heavier than I would of thought... but still AMAZING."

The solid steel chain socks mount over your normal socks to give good grip in most icy conditions, and when your not using them you can lend them to a friend at a reasonable rate... £4 per day perhaps, snow problem!

One size fits all except 7-11, so please state size before coming to the garage.

GIFT-U-GRAB PRICE £10.99 per pair



TENTRALONICS- DIGITAL TENTICLE KIT

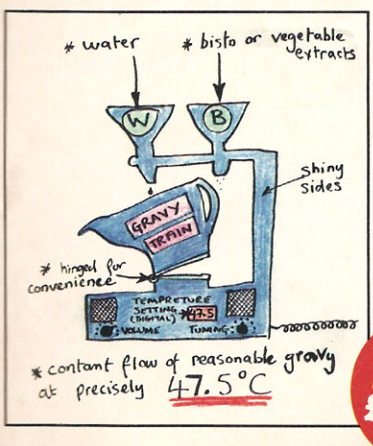
Imagine what it's like to be a snail with long tenticles that can process additional data about your surroundings. Well, a leading electronics company in Indonesia has come up with this innovative kit.

TENTRALONICS 'digital tenticles' fit over your head like a motorbicycle helmet and incorperate eight 'feelers'. State-of-the-art electronics in the hat decode signals and electronic data received from the tendrils. YOU wil be able to:-

GIFT-U-GRAB PRICE £79.99

- **'HEAR'** a whisper up to TEN MILES away!
- **'FEEL'** your way home at night!
- **'KNOW'** the tempreture of the bath before you get in!
- Gain extraordinary **'INSIGHT'** about what's around the corner.

TENTRALONICS is available in reddy-mouve, silver or greeny-grey, and comes with battery belt as standard.



THERMALLY CONTROLLED GRAVY BOAT WITH INTERNAL 4 WATT STEREO FM RADIO

New from Japan, this amazing device will keep gravy at an absolute constant 47.5 degrees Celsius*, 365 days a year... no problem. Serve gravy within a lovely atmospheric setting of high fidelity stereo sound to all of your friends and family, every day of the week.

(*voted best tempreture for beef gravy, 1989)

- Easy to maintain and use, just leave it in the centre of the table and top up with cold water and Bisto as required;
- Uses 45 AA size batteries for convenient outdoor use;
- Mains adaptor allows 24-hour non-stop gravy despencing 'train';
- Never has to be cleaned;
- Attractive shiny sides;
- Stereo FM radio.

Now *you* can enjoy the Sunday roast **ANYWHERE!**

GIFT-U-GRAB PRICE £14.99



Mr Cursor

He's got a plan...

I DON'T KNOW ABOUT YOU, BUT something that pisses me off quite a bit is the fact that the Greenhouse Effect is taking so long to work.

Ten years ago scientists were saying, "By the year 2000 Britain will be experiencing Mediterranean winters."Oh yeah? So how come it's 1997 and it's still bloody freezing outside. Lying bastards! And it's not as if I haven't done my bit towards global warming, either, so you can't blame me. I've been buying and dumping second-hand fridges for ages now. I must have 'redistributed' a hundred of the things over the last three years, and I always make sure that the CFC stuff leaks out.

And that's not all.



☛ To avoid sodden land masses, detach here...

--- 'Fly like a bird in the sky' – why doesn't the *whole* of Britain go south, and not just for the winter? And piss off the ex-pats in Majorca at the same time.

Top Gear

Cars! When I buy a car, I generally spend no more than £200. Yes, I'm talking about mobile carbon monoxide factories here. A trip to my local Tesco's and back produces more pollutants per cubic metre than an entire Formula One race weekend. I kid ye not. The only trouble with these 200 quid cars is that once the MOT's run out you have to chuck them away, but this is actually part of the plan too... load the expired beast up with some fridges, drive to a quarry, set fire to everything, and then over the edge it all goes. Then buy another £200 vehicle. And so on. I've owned an old Volvo, an old Cortina, an old Escort, an old Talbot Horizon, an old Austin Maxi, an old Sierra, a prehistoric Vauxhall Viva... the list is endless, and includes what was called a 'Datsun 1200 Special Edition'. (It actually said that on the boot, in silver italics... *'Datsun 1200 Special Edition'*. I was sitting in a ball of smoke at a set of traffic lights one time when a car pulled alongside; the driver leaned across and shouted through his open passenger window, "Special Edition? You must be fucking joking, mate!" It made his day. I felt like Father Christmas).

But back to the Greenhouse Effect, and my attempts to speed it up. Electricity then, as received from coal-fired power stations. I leave all the lights on in my flat 24 hours a day, seven days a week – and they're all 150 watters. I also leave every item of eletrical aparatus switched on: meaning the neighbours get a continuous drone of hoover, fan heaters, food mixers etc, right around the clock. Even with all this, I found I was still left with an unused socket in my bedroom, so I got hold of a job lot of gigantic industrial capacitors which I filled (and continue to fill), one at a time. I then bury them in a nearby park. I don't know how long they hold their charge, but if you want some ludicrously cheap electricity I'll sell you the burial-site map co-ordinates for 30 quid.

Nevertheless, regardless of all my activities (and they've cost me heaps), it's still bloody cold outside. The Greenhouse Effect isn't doing nearly enough; the scientists' promise of a Mediterranean paradise hasn't been delivered and our entire country is a steaming pile of cack.

There is one option open, though.

Move it south

And that's my plan. Relocate the UK – or at least most of it. Yes, it sounds like quite an undertaking, doesn't it, to kind of 'move' a whole country. But I don't reckon it'll be as hard as you imagine. All that's needed is determination, manpower, consolidation and, ultimately, expertise. I set up a little site on the Internet, but didn't get much of a hit rate, so I decided this back page plea was the better way of going about things: ie. how about zillions of little sites on the Internet? Get them thriving, and then join them together. You and me. All of us. Let's do this together. With enough impetus, we can crack the problem.

To get the ball rolling, here are my thoughts on what might be done. If you spot a flaw then great, but let me know how it can be ironed out. This is an evolving project, after all.

1. With tunneling equipment (*à la* Chunnel), we hollow out the underside of mainland Britain in a sort of honeycomb fashion.
2. We fill this newly hollowed out mainland with helium. It's more expensive than hydrogen, sure, but at least it's inert.
3. East Anglia is a problematic area: it's so prone to flooding that it'll always be dead weight... so we'll have to kind of 'chop it off'. We'll leave it where it is. (Maybe Holland would like to have it. They'd be welcome.)
4. Now we need a sort of giant outboard motor at the top of Scotland, which I imagine will have to be powered by fission or fusion or anti-matter or something. Whatever. That can be delegated later.
5. I want to steer! I want to steer! A gigantic ship-style bridge thingybob will have to be built in Southampton. It'll be as high as New York's Trade Towers, but wider. "All ahead full," I'll be saying. "Hard right rudder." Ding, ding, ding!
6. I've planned the route, which goes through the Bay Of Biscay, heads down the west coast of France and Portugal, and culminates somewhere around Morocco. (The UK – even minus East Anglia – is too big to get through the Strait of Gibraltar, so forget the Med.)
7. Time to release the helium (through boreholes). Some flooding will ensue as the country settles to the seabed, but never forget we have Wales, Yorkshire and Scotland on-side. They finally have a use. Hoorah for the Taffs and the Jocks! Hoorah for altitude!
8. Then we all start hanging out in the sun, and everything is like really, really groovy. Street markets. Siestas. Olive oil. Balconies. Old people with prune-like skin. And on and on and on. Bliss.
9. Time to send a fax to Northern Ireland: "You can stay up there or you can come and join us down here – but you've got to bring your oil with you."
10. Er, and that's that. So what do you reckon? Vaguely feasible? Or am I pissing into the wind?

(Wouldn't it be easier to emigrate? – Ed.) Z

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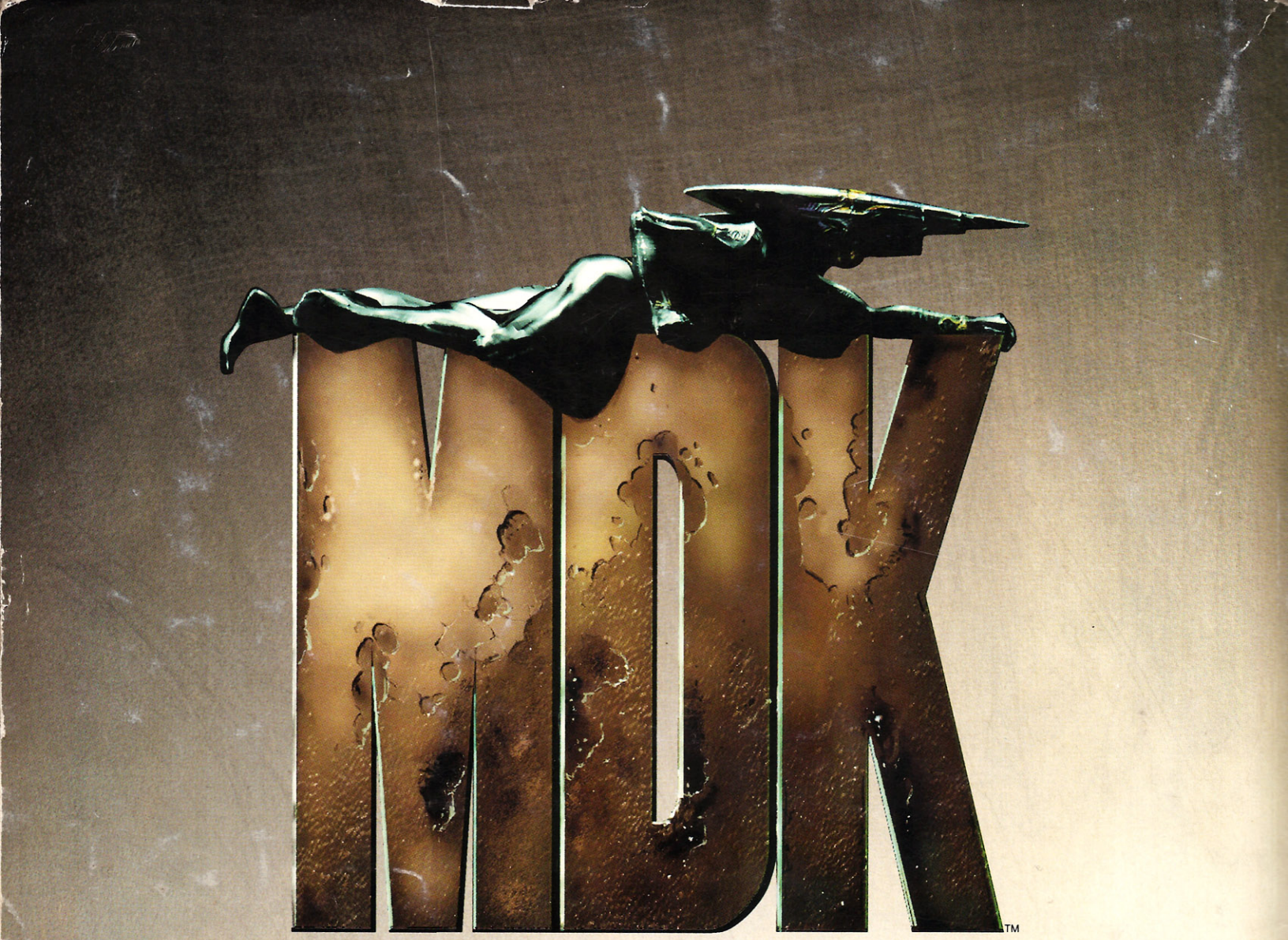




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